

*With Best Compliments
from*

A Well-Wisher



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Thank you, dear readers for the encouraging response we have got from you for our first special issue on Banis in Bharatanatyam and Recent Trends. Thanks also for another encouraging pat on the back we received recently, from the Sangeet Natak Akademi, no less, who have granted financial assistance for Shanmukha. We march ahead with renewed energy. Amarendra Dhaneshwar pays tribute to the departed colossus of Hindustani music Bhimsen Joshi. Ancient Tamil literary works like the Silappadigaram that pre-date by many centuries Carnatic music as we know it today, throw up interesting information on the origins of raga-based music. Silappadigarathil Vattapaalai is an essay on some of these references by the erudite Dr. R.S. Jayalakshmi. Veena vidushi E. Gayathri shares with Jyothi Mohan, experiences of her musical evolution while Kripa Subramaniam explores the contribution of the voice factor to the success of a musician in Path to Glory. Aishwarya Harish reports on her experience at Raja Rajeshwaram – the 1000th year celebration of the Tanjavur Brihadeeshwara temple. P.P. Ramachandran reviews a book which has been in the news in the past year – India's Great Masters by Raghu Rai and Ashok Vajpeyi and Nalini Dinesh reports on events of the last quarter at the sabha and at the Vidyalyaya.

Tribute to Bhimsen Joshi

- Amarendra Dhaneshwar

"The excellency of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeable disappear", writes John Keats. Bhimsen Joshi's music conformed to this definition of good art. If an opinion poll is held in order to decide the most popular classical vocalist in the country, the verdict would undoubtedly go in favour of Pt. Bhimsen Joshi. Bhimsen Joshi stood tallest among the practitioners of vocal music in the post-Independence era. The most creditable thing about him was that he could hold this position for well over five decades. So much so, that for the uninitiated common man the name Bhimsen Joshi was synonymous with classical music.



Bhimsen Joshi performing at the Golden Jubilee celebration of our sabha

Bhimsen was one singer whose appeal was truly national. Whether it was Madras, Bombay, Chandigarh or

Calcutta, a Bhimsen Joshi concert was always a sell-out. All his contemporaries had some specific areas of influence. Bhimsen, however, was popular in every nook and corner of the country. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that Bhimsen Joshi was not merely a singer but a phenomenon. The singer who is identified with 'Des Raga' and 'Mile Sur', the two national integration theme songs popular on the television screen maintained an enduring love affair with his perennially growing audience which would be the envy of any performing artiste.

'Naad' which really means sound has been defined as vital power by John Woodroffe. Bhimsen's voice has that quality. Bhimsen Joshi as a performer and his music exuded vitality which the audience found irresistible. As one author has noted, "A raag as an elaboration of a set theme can be dead or alive depending upon the inward quality and sensibility of the artiste performing. The performer is not only an executant musician but also a composer". Bhimsen Joshi combined these attributes admirably which explains his rapport with music-lovers of all generations. When he performed he would be oblivious of his surroundings and would go into a kind of trance, transporting the audience to another world.

The mere sound of his voice which vibrated profusely in the lower octave exercised a hypnotic effect on the seasoned as well as the star-struck



Bhimsen Joshi being conferred the National Eminence Award for Lifetime Achievement in the year 2003

listener. How did he cultivate that voice? Bhimsen was reluctant to discuss this topic. Once, this writer could draw him out when he was staying with Kakubhai Khmjee at his Matunga East residence. He would do 'mandra sadhana' for hours together in his initial days. Practising the notes in the lower octave is a standard answer given by singers. It did not satisfy me. Hence, I probed further. 'Omksadhana' was his cryptic reply. As a singer, I have followed this precept and have got wonderful feedback on my music. The credit goes to the maestro.

Bhimsen has been pigeonholed into the Kirana gharana to which he belonged (that he was a student of Sawai Gandharva, the doyen of the Kirana gharana is well-known). His roots lay in the gharana orthodoxy, but he had grown far beyond the confines of the gharana. Bhimsen had heard and imbibed the best of music from other masters like Amir Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Kesarbai Kerkar. There is little doubt that he had picked up aspects of their singing styles as he grew up singing. The slow and unhurried alaaps of Amir Khan which

reflected in his ragas like Darbari, Puriya and Abhogi were moulded after Amir Khan. His flashy taans were very much in the Bade Ghulam Ali Khan idiom of the Patiala gayaki. "I used to come from Dharwad to listen to these singers performing at the Vikramaditya and Sur Singar Samsad conferences in Bombay", he told this writer. Kesarbai's alaps were closely knit to the matra of the taal. Bhimsen in his later years adopted this kind of alapchari while singing bada khyals. "I owe them a lot. They were like my gurus", he would humbly say. One common criticism against him was that he sang only a few ragas. There is an element of truth in this. However, his repertoire of ragas expanded as he matured in years. We began to hear ragas like Bihag, Brindabani Sarang and Bageshri from Bhimsen Joshi.

A few years ago at the Xavier's Quadrangle, ace violinist M.S. Gopalakrishnan's Malkauns was beginning to cast its magic spell over the audience which was sitting in the dark with only the performing area lit up. Suddenly, there was an unexpected round of applause which surprised even Gopalakrishnan. Only

after a few moments did he realize that it was meant for Bhimsen Joshi who had made his entry into the college premises. He slowly walked in, supported by two young volunteers. Age had obviously made encroachments on the veteran singer's erstwhile athletic frame. Even in that available light his fans could spot his familiar figure and greeted him with a thunderous applause which indicated his continuing hold over his listeners which none of his contemporaries have succeeded in penetrating.

Bhimsen's early years were full of struggle. He was enamoured of Abdul Karim Khan's music which he heard at a market place where a shop was playing the master's disc and Bhimsen was completely bowled over. The desire to learn that music took possession of him and then began a long and arduous journey in search of the right teacher. He left his home in Gadag in Uttar Karnataka and changed several trains as he had to travel without ticket because of being practically penniless. He sang to the fellow passengers and collected some money. He wandered all over north India and then went to Calcutta where he fell at the feet of Pahadi Sanyal, the popular film actor and singer. As related by Kumar Prasad Mukherjee in his book 'The Lost World of Hindustani Music', Sanyal did not mince words and told him that Bhimsen had 'a voice of a buffalo calf with a cold' and had no future in music. Sanyal offered him some petty jobs in the New Theatres studio which would fetch him enough money to survive. Later on the same Sanyal was flabbergasted when he heard Bhimsen singing to packed houses in Calcutta and related the

incident to him after touching his feet.

Bhimsen for a long time found comfort in the alluring company of the Bacchus. This affected his punctuality and many times even his performances. Yet the audience was so much in love with his voice and his music that they condoned such lapses indulgently and even tales of his alcoholism became a part of the gossip which built up a halo around him as a singer with a demonic vigour. "In the 1960s Vile Parle Music Circle had organized his concert and all the 500 tickets were sold in advance. Bhimsen did not turn up till 8 p.m. for the concert which was to begin at 5 p.m. The organizers announced that the concert stood cancelled and ticket money would be refunded. All the 500 members took the refund and walked away and soon they spotted Bhimsen's car entering the premises. The concert was rescheduled at 10 pm and 497 members bought back the tickets and Bhimsen sang till the wee hours to the delight of the audience", says Sadanand Danait, the founder of the Vile Parle Music Circle. Such was the esteem in which Bhimsen Joshi was held.

"To what would you attribute your success as a singer?" was the question I once put to him. The humble man that he was, he pointed his fingers to his own forehead and said 'Nasib' (my good fortune). He is the most imitated singer of his generation. In one of his most popular bhajans there is a line that the one who worships the Lord (Hari) would attain the prime position (Param Pad Payega). Bhimsen Joshi has attained his 'param pad' from which he can never be dislodged.

சிலப்பதிகாரத்தில் வட்டபாலை

- R. S. Jayalakshmi

இசை என்றாலே அது ராகம், தாளம், ஸாஹித்யம் மூன்றும் சேர்ந்து இருப்பதுதான். இது எந்த இசை முறைக்கும் பொருந்தும். தமிழ் இசை என்பது மிகவும் பழமை வாய்ந்தது. ராகத்திற்கு ஒப்பாக பண்ணும், தாளமும், பொருளுடன் கூடிய சொற்களும் கூடி அமைந்தது தான் தமிழ் இசை. கி.மு காலத்தைச் சேர்ந்த தொல்காப்பியத்திலிருந்தே இசையைப்பற்றிய குறிப்பு பல நமக்குக் கிடைக்கிறது. அதன் பின் சங்க நூல்களான பத்துப்பாட்டு, எட்டுத்தொகை போன்ற தமிழ் இலக்கிய நூல்களில் இருந்தும் இசைக் குறிப்புகள் பல தொகுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

இளங்கோவடிகளால் இரண்டாயிரம் ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் இயற்றப்பட்ட சிலப்பதிகாரம் என்ற காப்பியமானது தமிழ் இசைக்கு ஒரு முக்கிய ஆதாரமாக உள்ளது. பத்துப்பாட்டு எட்டுத்தொகை போன்ற சங்கநூல்களில் இசை செய்திகள் காணப்பட்டாலும் சிலம்பில் இருக்கும் இசை செய்திகளை தொகுத்தால் இசையைப் பற்றி தனியாகவே ஒரு நூல் எழுதும் அளவிற்கு விஷயங்கள் இருப்பது இதன் சிறப்பினை கூடுதலாக்குகிறது. இந்த காப்பியத்திற்கு இரண்டு உரைகள் உள்ளன. அரும்பத உரை ஆசிரியரின் உரை சுருக்கமாகவும் அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் உரை விரிவாகவும் உள்ளது. இந்த இரு உரைகளும் இசையின் பல செய்திகளை விரிவாக விளக்கியுள்ளன. சிலப்பதிகாரத்திற்கும்

இரு உரைகளுக்கும் இடையே ஏறத்தாழ 1000 ஆண்டுகள் இடைவெளி உள்ளதும் மனதிற்கு கொள்ளப்பட வேண்டிய செய்தியாகும்.

சிலப்பதிகாரத்தில் இசை செய்திகள் என்று பார்க்கையில் இசையாளர்கள் அதாவது இசை விற்பன்னர்கள், இசைக் கருவிகள், தாளங்கள், இசை உருப்படிகள் போன்ற பல அரிய விஷயங்கள் பொதிந்து கிடைக்கின்றன.

இந்த ஆய்வுக் கட்டுரையில் இசை முறை அதாவது இசை மரபு பற்றி, குறிப்பாக பாலைகளைப் பெற என்ன முறைகள் கையாளப்பட்டன என்பது பற்றி மட்டும் கூறப்படுகிறது.

நம் இசையின் சிறப்பை அறிவதற்கு சிலம்பு செய்திகளை உரைகள் எவ்வாறு விளக்கியுள்ளன என்பதை புரிந்து கொள்வது மிகவும் முக்கியம். இந்த இரு உரைகளும் உரையாசிரியர்கள் காலத்தில் இருந்த பல இசை நூல்களின் துணை கொண்டே விளக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. ஆகையால் நம் இசை எவ்வளவு பழமையானது என்பது தெரிகிறது. யாமளேந்திரரின் இந்திரகாளியம், அறிவனாரின் பஞ்சமரபு, சாரகுமாரனின் இசை நுணுக்கம், ஆதிவாயிலாரின் பரதசேனாபதீயம், மதிவாணரின் நாடகத்தமிழ் நூல் ஆகியவையே நமது உரைக்கு மூலங்களான இசை நூல்கள் என்று அடியார்க்கு நல்லாரே குறிப்பிடுகிறார். இந்த நூல்களில் இருந்து பல

செய்யுள்கள் இவ்விரு உரை ஆசிரியர்களாலும் மேற்கோள்களாகக் கொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. சில இடங்களில் சூத்திரங்களை கொடுத்து எந்த நூலில் இருந்து இந்த சூத்திரம் எடுக்கப்பட்டது என்ற ஆதாரமும் உரை ஆசிரியர்களால் கொடுக்கப் பட்டுள்ளது. சில சூத்திரங்களுக்கு மூலம் எது என்றும் தெரியவில்லை. பஞ்சமரபு பல செய்திகளை விளக்க ஆதாரமாக இருந்துள்ளது என்பது 1973ல் வெளிவந்துள்ள பஞ்சமரபு நூலை பார்க்கையில் தெரிகிறது.

சிலப்பதிகாரத்தில் உள்ள 30 காதைகளில் அதாவது பகுப்புகளில் முக்கியமான இசை குறிப்புகள் காணப்படும் காதைகளில் அரங்கேற்றுக்காதை, இந்திரவிழுவ ரெடுத்தகாதை, கானல்வரி, வேனிற்காதை, ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவை ஆகியவை முக்கியமானவையாகும். இதில் சிலம்பின் ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவையில் காணப்படும் செந்நிலை மண்டிலம் என்ற ஒரு சொல் வட்டபாலை என்று உரை ஆசிரியர்களால் விவரிக்கப் படுகின்றது. இந்த விளக்கத்திற்கு இரு உரையாசிரியர்களும் பல மேற்கோள் செய்யுள்கள் கொடுத்து விளக்கியுள்ளனர்.



தமிழ் மரபை புரிந்து கொள்வதற்கு முதலில் இந்த முறையில் கையாளப் பட்டுள்ள சில வார்த்தைகளின் தற்கால இணை சொற்களை புரிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

பாலை என்பது ஏழு ஸ்வரங்களைக் கொண்ட ஒரு நிரல் அதாவது ஸ்கேல்.

பண் என்பது ராகத்தைக் குறிக்கும்.

நரம்பு - ஸ்வரம்

குரல் திரிபு - கிரஹபேதம்

அலகு - ஸ்ருதி

மதுரை காண்டம் ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவையில் சிலப்பதிகார மூலத்தில் உள்ள

அவர் தம் செந்நிலை மண்டிலத்தால் கற்கடகக் கைகோத்து

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என்ற வரியில் உள்ள செந்நிலை மண்டிலமே வட்டபாலையாக விளக்கப்படுகிறது.

வட்டபாலை என்பது பாலைகளைப் பெறுவதற்கு பயன்பட்ட ஒரு அமைப்பு. இதில் பண்ணிரண்டு ராசிகளை வைத்து அதில் ஏழு ராசிகளில் ஏழு நரம்புகளை அதாவது ஸ்வரங்களை நிறுத்துவார்கள். குரல், துத்தம், கைக்கிளை, உழை, இளி, விளரி, தாரம் ஆகியவை ஏழு நரம்புகளின் பெயர்கள். இவை முறையே ஸட்டஜம், ரிஷபம், காந்தாரம், மத்யமம், பஞ்சமம், தைவதம், நிஷாதம் ஆகிய ஸ்வரங்களுக்கு நிகராகக் கூறப்படுகின்றன. இந்த நரம்புகளை குரல் திரிபு செய்து அதாவது கிரஹபேதம் செய்து புதிய பாலைகள் பெறப்பட்டன.

இம்மாதிரி புதிய பாலைகளைப் பெற இரண்டு முறைகள் இருந்தன. வட்டபாலை என்ற அமைப்பில் இருந்து தொன்றுபடு முறையில் குரல் திரிபு செய்து ஏழு பாலைகளும் வம்புறு மரபு என்ற புதிய முறையில் பன்னிரு பாலைகளும் பெறப்படுகின்றன.

வட்டத்தில் ஏழு நரம்புகள் எப்படி நிறுத்தப்பட்டன என்ற விளக்கள் சிலப்பதிகாரத்தில் உள்ளது.

ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவையில் ஆங்கு, தொழுவிடை யேறு குறித்து வளர்த்தார் எழுவர் இளம் கோதையர் என்று தம் மகளை நோக்கித் தொன்றுபடு முறையான் நிறுத்தி இடைமுது மகளிவர்க்குப் படைத்துக் கொள் பெயரிடுவாள் குடமுதல் இடமுறையாகக் குரல் துத்தம் கைக்கிளை உழை இளி விளரி தாரம் என

விரிதரு பூங்குழல் வேண்டிய பெயரே.

ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவை பக். 439 -13

சிலம்பு மூலத்தில் காணப்படும் இந்த செய்யுளில் வட்டத்தில் ஏழு பெண்களை மேற்கு திசையில் தொடங்கி இடப்பக்கமாக தொடரும்படியாக நிறுத்தி குரல் துத்தம் கைக்கிளை உழை இளி விளரி தாரம் என்று அவர்களுக்கு பெயரிட்டு அமைக்கப்பட்டது விவரிக்கப்படுகிறது.

மேலே உள்ள செய்யுளில் இருந்து தொன்றுபடு முறை என்ற ஒரு மரபு இருந்தது என்பது தெரிவதுடன் ஏழு நரம்புகளின் பெயர்களும் காணப்படுகின்றன.

ஈரேழ் தொடுத்த செம்முறைக் கேள்வியின்

ஓரேழ் பாலை நிறுத்தல் வேண்டி வன்மையிற் கிடந்த தார பாகமும் மென்மையிற் கிடந்த குரலின் பாகமும்

மெய்கிளை நரம்பிற் கைக்கிளை கொள்ள

கைக்கிளை ஒழிந்த பாகமும் பொற்புடைத்

தளராத் தாரம் விளரிக்கு ஈத்துக் கிளைவழிப்பட்டனள் ஆங்கே கிளையும்

தன்கிளை அழிவு கண்டு அவள் வயிற்சேர

ஏனை மகளிரும் கிளைவழிச்சேர மேலது உழையிளி கீழது

கைக்கிளை

வம்புறு மரபிற் செம்பாலை ஆய....

இறுதி ஆதியாக ஆங்கவை பெறுமுறை வந்த பெற்றியின்

தீங்காது

படுமலை செவ்வழி பகர்

அரும்பாலை யெனக் குரல்குரலாக தற்கிழமை திரிந்தபின்

முன்னதன் வகையே முறைமையில் திரிந்து ஆங்கு

இளிமுதலாகிய எதிர்படுகிழமையும் கோடி விளரி மேற்செம்பாலை என

இணைநரம்புடையன

அணைவுறக்கொண்டு ஆங்கு

யாழ்மேல் பாலை இடமுறை

மெலியக்

குழல் மேல் கோடி வலமுறை

மெலிய

அரங்கேற்றுக்காதை - பக். 67 - வரி 70-93

அரங்கேற்று காதையில் காணப்படும் இந்த வரிகளில் இருந்து ஏழு நரம்புகளின் 4 4 3 2 4 3 2 என்ற மாத்திரை அலகு மாற்றம் செய்யப்பட்டு புதிய மரபான வம்புறு மரபிற்கு அடிப்படைப்பாலையான செம்பாலை பெறப்பட்ட முறை சொல்லப்பட்டுள்ளது.

மேலும் மேற்கண்ட செய்யுளில் இருந்து

செம்பாலை, படுமலைப்பாலை, செவ்வழிப்பாலை, அரும்பாலை, கோடிப்பாலை, விளரிப்பாலை, மேற்செம்பாலை என்ற ஏழு பாலைகளின் பெயர்கள் தெரிகின்றன. இந்த பாலைகள்தான் பண்களை பெறுவதற்கு அடிப்படையாக இருந்தன. அதனுடன் குரல் குரலாக தற்கிழமை திரிந்தபின் என்ற வரி மூலம் குரல் திரிபு என்ற முறை அதாவது கிரஹபேதம் செய்து புதிய ராகங்களைப் பெறுவதற்கு நிகரான குரல் திரிபு முறை இரண்டாம்

நூற்றாண்டிற்கு முன்பே வழக்கத்தில் இருந்தது என்பதனையும் அறிய முடிகிறது.

பிழையா மரபின் ஈரேழ் கோவையை

உழை முதல் கைக்கிளை இறுவாய் கட்டி

இணை கிளை பகை நட்பு என்ற

இந் நான்கின்

இசைபுணர் குறிநிலை எய்த

நோக்கிக்

குரல்வாய் இளிவாய்க் கேட்டனள் அன்றியும்

வரன் முறை மருங்கின் ஐந்தினும் ஏழினும்

உழை முதலாகவும் உழை ஈறாகவும்

குரல் முதலாகவும் குரல் ஈறாகவும்

அகநிலை மருதமும் புறநிலை

மருதமும்

அருகியல் மருதமும் பெருகியல்

மருதமும்

நால்வகை சாதியும் நலம் பெற

நோக்கி

வேனிற்காதை பக். 220 வரி 31 -41

மேலே உள்ள சிலம்பு வரிகள் நரம்புகளின் உறவுகள் இணை கிளை பகை நட்பு என சொல்லப்பட்டன என்பதும் தெரிகிறது. வாதி, ஸம்வாதி, அனுவாதி, விவாதி என்று ஸ்வரங்களுக்குள் உள்ள உறவானது கூறப்படுவது போல் தமிழ் மரபில் இணை, கிளை, பகை, நட்பு என்ற உறவானது கூறப்பட்டது.

சிலப்பதிகாரத்தில் காணப்படும் இசை பற்றிய இவ்வளவு விஷயங்களையும் நாம் புரிந்துகொள்ள உரைகளின் விளக்கங்களும் அவசியமாகிறது.

இனி உரை ஆசிரியர்களின் விளக்கங்களைப் பார்ப்போம்.

சிலம்பு மூலத்தில் உள்ள மேற்கண்ட செய்திகள் உரை ஆசிரியர்களால் மிகவும் விரிவாக அவர்கள் காலத்து இசை மரபினை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு விளக்கப்பட்டன.

உரையில் காணப்படும் வட்டபாலை தொடர்பான செய்யுள்கள்:

அரும்பத உரை ஆசிரியரின் விளக்கங்களும் அடியார்க்கு நல்லாரின் விளக்கங்களும் வட்டபாலையை பொருத்தவரை ஒத்திருப்பதால் இங்கு அடியார்க்கு நல்லாரின் செய்யுள்களே மிகுதியாக கொடுக்கப்பட உள்ளன. இருப்பினும் உதாரணத்திற்கு இரு செய்யுள்கள் அரும்பத உரையாசிரியருடையதும் கொடுக்கப்படுகிறது.

ஆழியும் ஆரும்போல் கீறிச் சிறுதிசைக்கண் ஊழின் ஓரோ ஒன்றுடன் கீறிச் சூழ எருதாதி கீழ்த் திசைக் கொண்டு ஈராரும் எண்ணிக் கருதி நிலக் கயிற்றைக் காண்

சினேந்திர மாலை ஆருட சக்கரம்

இந்த செய்யுளில் உள்ள முக்கிய குறிப்பு எருது ஆதி கீழ் திசையில் தொடங்கி 12 ராசிகளை வைக்கச் சொல்லி கொடுத்துள்ளதாகும். இதனால் வட்டத்தில் கிழக்கு திசையில் இடபராசியை வைக்க வேண்டும் என்பது தெரிகிறது.

இந்த முறையில் வைக்கப்பட்ட 12 ராசிகளில் 7 நரம்புகள் எந்தெந்த ராசிகளில் நிற்கும் என்பது கீழ்க்கண்ட

செய்யுளில் கூறப்படுகிறது.

குரல் துலை வில் துத்தம் கைக்கிளையே கும்பம் பரிய உழை மீனம் பாவாய் தளராக் குரல் கோல் தனு துத்தம் கும்பம் கிளையாம் வரலால் உழை மீனமாம்

இன்னும் பலச் செய்யுள்கள் அரும்பத உரையில் உள்ளன. எனினும் விரிவாக காணப்படும் அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் உரையில் இருந்தே செய்யுள் கீழே கொடுக்கப்பட உள்ளன.

அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் வட்டபாலையை விளக்க கொடுத்துள்ள செய்யுள்கள்.

ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவையில் வரும் செய்யுள்கள் இவை பக்கம் 449-450

ஆயம் சதுரம் திரிகோணம் வட்டமெனப் பாய நான்கும் பாலையாகும்

இது மொத்தம் எவ்வளவு பாலைகள் இருந்தன என்பதை அறிய உதவுகிறது.

வட்டம் என்பது வகுக்குங் காலை ஒரேழ் தொடுத்த மண்டலமாகும்

வட்டபாலை என்பது 7 நரம்புகளை வைத்து அமைக்கப்பட்டது என்பதை தெரிவிக்கும் சூத்திரம் இது.

எதிராகும் இராசி வலமிடமாக எதிரா இடம் மீனமாக முதிராத ஈறாறு இராசிகளை இட்டடைவே நோக்கவே

ஏராந்த மண்டலம் என்றெண்ண

மேலே உள்ள செய்யுள் வட்டத்தில் 12 ராசிகளை நிறுத்தும் முறையை

தெரிவிக்கிறது. மேலே கொடுத்துள்ள வட்டத்தின் படத்தைப் பார்த்தால் ராசிகளில் நரம்புகள் நிற்கும் அமைப்பு தெரியும்.

அடுத்து கீழே உள்ள செய்யுள் 12 ராசிகளில் நரம்புகளை நிறுத்தி வம்புறு மரபு என்ற புதிய அமைப்பை பெற உதவுகிறது.

ஏத்தும் இடபம் அலவனுடன் சீயம் கோல் தனுக் கும்பமொடு மீனம் இவை பார்த்து குரல் முதல் தாரம் இருவாய்க் கிடந்த நிரல் ஏழும் செம்பாலை நேர்.

அடுத்து வரும் செய்யுளும் வட்டத்தில் 12 ராசிகளில் 7 நரம்புகள் நிறுத்துவதை விளக்கும் செய்யுள்தான். இதன்படி நரம்புகளை நிறுத்தினால் தொன்றுபடுமுறை என்ற அமைப்பு கிடைக்கும்.

துலை நிலை குரலும் தனுநிலை துத்தமும் நிலைபெறு கும்பத்து நேர்கைக்கிளையும் மீனத்துழையும் விடைநிலத் திளியும் மானக் கடகத்து மன்னிய விளரியும் அரியிடைத் தாரமுமணைவுறக்கொளலே

12 ராசிகளில் 7 நரம்புகளை நிறுத்தும்போது துலா ராசியில் குரலை வைத்து ஆரம்பித்தால் தொன்றுபடுமுறை அமைப்பும் இடபராசியில் குரலை வைத்து ஆரம்பித்தால் வம்புறு மரபு என்ற புதிய முறையும் கிடைக்கும்.

குரல் துத்தம் நான்கு கிளை

மூன்று இரண்டாம் குரையா உழை இளி நான்கு விரையா விளரி எனின் மூன்று இரண்டு தாரம் எனச் சொன்னார் களறி சேர் கண்ணுற்றவர்.

மேலே உள்ள செய்யுளில் 7 நரம்புகளின் மாத்திரைகள் அதாவது குரல், துத்தம், கைக்கிளை, உழை, இளி, விளரி, தாரம் ஆகிய நரம்புகளின் அலகுகள் 4 4 3 2 4 3 2 என்று கூறப்படுகின்றன. இந்த அலகுகளின் கூட்டு எண்ணிக்கை 22 வருவதால் தமிழ் மரபிலும் 22 அலகுகள்தான் என்பதை அறிய உதவுகிறது. 22 அலகு என்பது 22 ஸ்ருதிகளைக் குறிக்கும்.

தாரத்து உழைபிறக்கும் உழையில் குரல் பிறக்கும் குரலுள் இளி பிறக்கும் இளியுள் துத்தம் பிறக்கும் துத்தத்துள் விளரி பிறக்கும் விளரியுள் கைக்கிளை பிறக்கும்

தாரத்தை முதல் நரம்பாகக் கொண்டு ஏழு நரம்புகளும் குரல் இளி முறையில் அதாவது ஸட்ஜ பஞ்சம முறையில் பிறக்கின்றன என்பது அறியப்படுகிறது. தாரம் என்பது நிஷாதத்திற்கு நிகராகக் கூறப்படுகிறது. அதன்படி

நி - ம, ம - ஸ, ஸ - ப, ப - ரி, ரி - த, த - க என்று தொடர்ச்சியில் 7 ஸ்வரங்களும் பிறக்கும்.

தொன்றுபடுமுறையில் குரல் திரிபு செய்ய நரம்புகளின் மாத்திரைகள் ஒரு நரம்பிலிருந்து இன்னொரு நரம்பிற்கு மாற்றப்பட்டது எப்படி என்பது கீழே உள்ள செய்யுளில் தெரிவிக்கப்படுகிறது.

குரல் இளியின் பாகத்தை வாங்கி
ஒரொன்று
வரையாது தாரத்து உழைக்கும்
விரைவின்றி
எத்தும் விளரி கிளைக்கு ஈக்க
ஏந்திழையாய்
துத்தம் குரலாகும் சொல்.

குரல், துத்தம், கைக்கிளை, உழை,
இளி, விளரி, தாரம் ஆகிய ஏழு
நரம்புகளுக்கு 4 4 3 2 4 3 2 என்ற
அலகுகளை அளித்து அவற்றையும்
அலகு மாற்றம் செய்து புதிய
பாலைகளை பெறுதல் குரல் திரிபு
எனப்படும். மேலே உள்ள செய்யுளின்
விளக்கம் என்னவெனில்

குரல் என்ற நரம்பின் 4 அலகில்
இரண்டையும், இளி என்ற நரம்பில் 4
அலகில் இரண்டையும் எடுத்து
கைக்கிளை, உழை, விளரி, தாரம்
ஆகிய 4 நரம்புகளுக்கு ஒவ்வொன்று
கொடுத்தால் துத்தம் என்ற நரம்பு
குரலாகும் என்பதாகும்.

அடுத்து வரும் இந்த செய்யுள்
அரங்கேற்றுக் காதையில் வரும்
வம்புறு மரபு செம்பாலையை
தோற்றுவிக்க அடியார்க்கு நல்லார்
கொடுத்துள்ள செய்யுளாகும்.

தாரபாகமும் குரலின் பாகமும்
நேர்நடு வண்கிளை கொள்ள நிற்ப
முன்னர் பாகமும் பின்னர்பாகமும்
விளரி குரலாகு மென்மணார் புலவர்

இந்த செய்யுளை பின்பற்றி அலகு
மாற்றம் செய்தால் ஏழு பாலைகள்
கிடைக்கும் என்பது தெரிந்ததே.
ஆனால் பன்னிருகால் திரிக்க
பன்னிருபாலை கிடைக்கும் என்று
உரைகளில் உள்ளது. ஆய்ச்சியர்
குரவையில் குரல் திரிபு

செய்யுமிடத்தில் 7 பாலைகள்
பிறக்கும் என்று கொடுத்துள்ள உரை
ஆசிரியர்கள் அரங்கேற்று காதையில்
12 பாலைகள் பிறக்கும் என்று
கொடுத்துள்ளது சிந்திக்க வைக்கிறது.
இந்த பன்னிரு பாலைகளின் உரு 91
என்றும் அதனுடன் 12 பாலைகளை
சேர்த்தால் 103 பண்கள் வரும்
என்பதனையும் உரைகள்
தெரிவிக்கின்றன. இங்கு உரு
என்பதனை திறன் அதாவது ஜன்யம்
என்று கொள்ளலாம்.

வட்டபாலையில் 12 ராசிகளில் 7
நரம்புகளை நிறுத்தி குரல் திரிபின்
மூலமும் அலகு மாற்றம் மூலம் புதிய
பாலைகளும் நாற்பெரும் பண்களும்
பெறப்பட்டன என்பதை அறிந்து
தற்காலத்தில் அதாவது 20
நூற்றாண்டில் பல இசை அறிஞர்கள்
விரிவான ஆய்வுகள் மேற்கொண்டு
தற்கால ராகங்களை அவற்றிற்கு
நிகராக சொல்லி உள்ளார்கள். இந்த
ஆய்வுகளில் பல கருத்து
வேறுபாடுகள் உள்ளன.

தற்காலத்தில் ஆய்வு செய்த பல
அறிஞர்கள் 4 பண்களுக்கும்,
7 பாலைகளுக்கும் நிகராக கூறும்
ராகங்கள் ஹரிகாம்போஜி, கல்யாணி,
தோடி, கரஹரப்ரியா, சங்கராபரணம்,
நடபைரவி, இருமத்திம தோடி ஆகிய
ராகங்களைத்தான். ஆனால் இந்த
ராகங்கள் வரிசை கிரமத்தில் எல்லா
அறிஞர்களுக்கும் மாறி
அமைந்துள்ளன. ஏனெனில் இவர்கள்
அடிப்படை பாலையை வேறுவேறாக
கொண்டதுதான் காரணம். ஆய்ச்சியர்
குரவையில் கூறப்படும்
தொன்றுபடுமுறை வலமுறையாகவும்
அரங்கேற்றுகாதையில் கூறப்படும்
வம்புறு மரபு இடமுறையாகவும்

எல்லோராலும் கொள்ளப்படுகிறது.

1917ம் ஆண்டு வெளியிடப்பட்ட
கருணாம்ருத ஸாகரம் என்ற
ஆப்ரஹாம் பண்டிதரின் நூலில் 7
பாலைகளும் நாற்பெரும் பண்களும்
விரிவாக விளக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.
நாற்பெரும் பண்களுள் முதல்
பண்ணான பாலையாழ் தற்கால ராகம்
சங்கராபரணத்திற்கு ஒப்பானது என
கூறி அதனை அடிப்படையாக
வைத்துக்கொண்டு 7 பாலைகளுக்கு
நிகரான ராகங்களை இவர் கூறுகிறார்.
சங்கராபரணம் வரவேண்டும்
என்பதற்காகவே இவர்
உரையாசிரியர்களால் சிம்ம ராசியில்
வைக்கப்பட்டுள்ள தார நரம்பை
கன்னி ராசியில் மாற்றிக்கொள்கிறார்.
இந்த மாற்றத்தினால் மற்ற
பாலைகளின் ராகங்களும் மாறி
வருகிறது. அதாவது சங்கராபரணம்
பாலையாழாகக் கொள்ளப்பட்டு
அதனை குரல் திரிபு செய்து
கரஹரப்ரியா, தோடி, கல்யாணி,
ஹரிகாம்போதி, சங்கராபரணம்,
நடபைரவி, இருமத்திம தோடி ஆகிய
ராகங்களைக் கூறுகிறார். இந்த
ராகங்களைப் பெறுவதற்கு குரலை
ஆரோஹண கிரமத்தில் நகர்த்திச்
செல்கிறார். இடமுறைக்கு குரலை
அவரோஹண கிரமத்தில் நகர்த்தி
செல்கிறார். ஆகையால் வலமுறையில்
கிடைத்த ராகங்களே தலைகீழாக
இடமுறையில் வருகின்றன.

யாழ் நூல் என்பது விபுலாநந்தரால்
1947ல் வெளியிடப்பட்ட நூலாகும்.
இதிலும் வட்டபாலை
விளக்கப்படுகிறது. இவர் இளி என்ற
நரம்பை ஷட்ஜத்திற்குநிகராகக்
கூறுவதால் இவரது ஆய்வுக்
கருத்துக்கள் மிகவும் மாறுபடுகிறது.

இவர் பாலையாழாக நிற்கும்
வட்டபாலை நரம்பு அமைப்பை
தாரக்கிரமம் என்று குறிப்பிடுகிறார்.
இதன் மூலம் கிடைக்கும் 7
பாலைகளின் தற்கால ராகங்களும்
வரிசையில் மாறுபடுகிறது.
தாரக்கிரமத்தில் தாரத்தை முதல்
நரம்பாகக் கொண்டு
மேற்செம்பாலையில் ஆரம்பித்து 7
பாலைகளுக்கும் இவர் கூறும்
ராகங்கள் மேசகல்யாணி,
ஹரிகாம்போதி, நடபைரவி, இரு
மத்திம தோடி, தீரசங்கராபரணம்,
கரஹரப்ரியா, ஹனுமத்தோடி
ஆகியவை இவரது ராகங்கள்.

இவரும் குரல் ஆரோஹணமாக
நகர்ந்தால் வலமுறை என்றும்
அவரோஹணமாக நகர்ந்தால்
இடமுறை என்றும் கொள்கிறார்.

1981ல் சிலப்பதிகாரத்து இசைத்
தமிழ் என்ற புத்தகத்தை எஸ்.
இராமநாதன் அவர்கள்
வெளியிட்டுள்ளார். இதிலும்
வட்டபாலை விரிவாக
விளக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இவர்
பாலையாழ் ஹரிகாம்போதி என்று
வைத்துக்கொண்டு அதில் பிறக்கும் 7
பாலைகளுக்கும் கல்யாணி, தோடி,
கரஹரப்ரியா, சங்கராபரணம், இரு
மத்திமதோடி, நடபைரவி ஆகிய
ராகங்களை நிகராகக் கூறுகிறார்.
இடமுறைக்கு கரஹரப்ரியாவை
அடிப்படை பாலையாகக் கொண்டு
குரல் திரிபு செய்து சங்கராபரணம்,
இருமத்திமத் தோடி, நடபைரவி,
ஹரிகாம்போதி, கல்யாணி, தோடி
ஆகிய ராகங்களைக் குறிப்பிடுகிறார்.

1986-ல் வி.ப.கா. சுந்தரம்
என்பவர் பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியத்தில்

இசையியல் என்ற தனது புத்தகத்தை வெளியிட்டுள்ளார். இதிலும் வட்டபாலை விரிவாக விளக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இவர் பாலையாழ் ஹரிகாம்போதி என்று கொண்டு 7 பாலைகளுக்கு நிகராக ஹரிகாம்போதி, நடபைரவி, இரு மத்திம தோடி, தீரசங்கராபரணம், கரஹரப்ரியா, ஹனுமத்தோடி, மேசகல்யாணி ஆகிய ராகங்களைக் கூறுகிறார். இடமுறைக்கு அரும்பாலையாக சங்கராபரணத்தை வைத்து அதில் குரல் திரிபு செய்கிறார். இந்த அமைப்பில் பார்க்கும்போது உழை குரலாக வருவது ஹரிகாம்போதி ஆகிறது. மற்ற ராகங்கள் நட, சங், கர, தோடி, கல் என வருகின்றன.

இவர்களைத் தொடர்ந்து சகோதரி மார்கரெட் பாஸ்டின் என்பவர் 2000 ஆண்டு தான் வெளியிட்ட இன்னிசைச் சிலம்பு என்ற தன் புத்தகத்தில் வட்டபாலையை ஆய்வு செய்து பலரது கருத்துக்களைக் கூறி எஸ் இராமநாதனின் கருத்துக்கள் நாற்பெரும் பண்ணிற்கும் தொன்றுபடுமுறை குரல் திரிபின் 7 பாலைகளுக்கு நிகரான ராகங்களை கூறுவதிலும் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ள வகையில் உள்ளன எனக் கூறி இடமுறை திரிபில் இவர் எஸ். இராமநாதன் அவர்களின் கருத்திலிருந்து முரண்படுகிறார். இவர் கூறும் இடமுறை ராகங்கள் உழை குரலாக வரும் செம்பாலை ஹரிகாம்போதி என்று நிறுவி அதில் அவரோகண கிரமத்தில் குரலை நகர்த்தினால் நடபைரவி, இரு மத்திமதோடி, சங்கராபரணம், கரஹரப்ரியா, தோடி, கல்யாணி

ஆகிய ராகங்கள் 7 பாலைகளாக வரும் என்கிறார். இவர் நாற்பெரும் பண் பிறப்பிலும் எஸ். இராமநாதனின் முறையே சரி என்கிறார். 12 பாலை பிறப்பில் இவர் நான்கு ஆய்வாளரின் கருத்துக்களையும் ஏற்கவில்லை. இவர் தன் கருத்தை சிலம்பு உரை வழி நின்று கூறுவதாகச் சொல்லி ஹரிகாம்போதியில் உழையை அதாவது மத்யமத்தை பிரதி மத்யமமாக மாற்றி வாசஸ்பதியையும் இதைப் போல் மற்ற ராகங்களையும் பெறலாம் என்கிறார். இவர் கருத்தும் சிந்திக்க வைக்கிறது.

ஒரு அலகு மாற்றத்தை சிலம்பில் அரங்கேற்றக்காதையின் மூலத்திலேயே இளங்கோவடிகள் கொடுத்துள்ளதை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு உரை ஆசிரியர்கள் அலகு மாற்றத்திற்கு சூத்திரமும் கொடுத்து இவ்வாறு பன்னிருகால் திரிக்க பன்னிரு பாலை வரும் என்றும் கூறியிருப்பதில் இருந்து எல்லா பாலைகளுமே ஹரிகாம்போதியாக ஆனால் வேறு வேறு ஸ்வரங்களை ஆரம்பமாக கொண்டு பாடப்பட்டனவோ எனவும் எண்ண வைக்கிறது. ஆனால் இதை நிறுவுவதற்கு ஆழ்ந்த ஆய்வு செய்தே தீர்வு சொல்ல இயலும்.

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Ethereal Elegance

- Interview with E. Gayatri by Jyothi Mohan



E. Gayatri

The beautiful veena recital by E. Gayatri last June at our sabha was marked by elegance and grace and her almost shy demeanour, prompted me to ask her for an interview. A reclusive child prodigy, who has conducted herself with quiet dignity, shying away from the media, surprised me with her candid response to my questions, through email. I had several questions to ask her and she very patiently typed out the replies most graciously, despite her busy schedule.

Not much is known about your childhood, except that you took the world by storm when you were barely eight years old. It is known that you

spent hours lost in the music that you played on the veena in the pooja room of your home. Did you learn formally from your mother from the beginning or were you taught by her after she found you playing on your own? What was it you played at that time? Was it music you had heard from your mother or something else? Did your mother teach you basics like all teachers do, or did she have no need to do so?

My interest in veena came naturally as my mother is a veena teacher. Having at least four veenas at home and "Karma" were the main reason for my keen interest. My mother, Smt. Kamala Aswathama was a veena vidushi, student of Smt. Kalpagam Swaminathan (in the gurukula system) and Kalakshetra, where she was fortunate to have direct training from legends like Mysore Vasudevachar, Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer, M.D. Ramanathan, Budalur Krishnamurthy, Musiri Subramania Iyer, among others.

My parents noticed that I was able to reproduce on the veena, tunes I heard over the radio. So they decided to start teaching me kritis. I was 5 years old. I did not learn sarali varisai, alankarams or even geetams.

My father, Shri G. Aswathama, was a film music director. He used to sing and guide me, as he was well-versed in classical music. He had been a student of Vizianagaram Music College along with Ghantasala,

P.Susheela and others. Many of his classical songs in movies like *Shri Gowri* for Vichitra Daampathyam were big hits. I had played for many of his films, *Sati Arundhati*, *Pasidi Manasulu*, *Vichitra Daampathyam*, *Manavudu Daanavudu*, *Maayani Mamata*, *Prema Vyuham* etc. Earlier Sri Chittibabu used to play veena in my father's films. All the bhajans and tillanas I play in my concerts have been tuned by my father.

Did you have a normal schooling, given that you were such a busy performer at that time? Did you ever feel you missed out on normal school life, chatting up friends etc? Did you go out to play like other children or did the veena have such a strong hold on you that you never found the inclination to do anything else?

My childhood toys were veenas and reproducing tunes (Hindi and Tamil film songs) that were being broadcast by Vividh Bharati on veena used to be my favourite pastime.

As a child, I was obsessed with the veena and did not feel like playing with other children. In classrooms, during lessons, I used to hallucinate about listening to exotic ragas and tanam on the veena. The dreamy look on my face prompted my teachers to reprimand me for not paying attention to my lessons. I could not afford to have a normal school life, due to my hectic travel schedule. Even while in station, I used to be extremely busy with my concert engagements and veena practice, with time for little else.

Did you spend hours practising

technique or did it just come naturally to you?

I owe my musical stature to arduous practice done at "Brahma muhurtham" (early mornings at 4 a.m.), for many hours (at least 3 in the morning and 2 after school in the evening), the guidance and support of my parents, Karma and above all, God's grace. I never practised any technique; even now, all I know is that my hands somehow convey whatever I feel like expressing. Yes, it came to me naturally though I feel everything comes from God who resides within us.

I remember listening to the early recordings of yours. The raga sketches had a totally different and alluring flavour than the ones one usually came across. There was a beautiful, haunting feeling about your veena playing which attracted us. How did that come about? Did you listen to anybody else's music or attend concerts by others?

In my early years whatever I played was done without any consciousness on my part. It was God's grace and I believe I don't do anything (even now). I really cannot tell you how I play whatever I play, as I don't know the answer to that. I did not learn from anybody other than my parents.

It is said that you came under the tutelage of Sangeeta Kalanidhi Shri T.M. Thiagarajan in 1988. Why, after performing for nineteen years did you feel the need for guidance? Can you tell us how he helped you in your music?

At the age of sixteen I lost my father (he had a massive heart-attack) and

my world crumbled. He was everything to me and after his demise I could not bring myself to play like before, though I went on performing mechanically. When I was 20 years old, I opted to marry and gladly quit the field. I was bored to tears with performing and had even lost interest in music. I wanted a totally different life. I went sailing with my husband, Shri E.V.Ramakrishna, who is a marine engineer. I was blessed with two daughters and enjoyed family life. But veena and music beckoned me again. I tried playing on my own and found it very tough to tap the music within me; I felt far removed and needed help. Trichur Narendran, my good friend and mridangist advised me to approach Shri T.M.Thiagarajan, who agreed to guide me.

I kept a veena tuned to his shruti and my classes started. I was startled when he began teaching me from the varnam again. I diligently absorbed and practised all that he taught me. He led me into a world full of exotic and fragrant flowers, gushing waterfalls, dazzling gems, grand and majestic oceans, ancient temples, the sanctum-sanctorum of temples, images of Gods, Goddesses, Kailash-Manasarovar, Himalayas etc., the list is unending. The world I have described was created by Shri TMT, through his over-powering and soul-stirring music and our musical interaction.

The years I had spent learning from my great Guru are the best of my life, I have no words to describe his music, or thank him enough for the enormous treasure he has given me.

Did your sister Shyamala also play with you? Nowadays, siblings are playing duets on stage. Did you both ever do so? Or did she take to playing the veena much later?

My sister, Shyamala Sajnani has always been playing veena like me - from childhood. No, we have never played together on stage. Over the years we have developed individual styles. I appreciate all the sibling duos, I think they are brilliant!

Did all the adoration and adulation from fans ever affect you in any way, considering you were such a young girl then?

As a child I could not understand why I was the focus of everybody's attention. I am down to earth and level-headed, not carried away by praise or adulation. I am also not particularly enamoured of fame.

Did the constant travel, being under the public eye all the time, the need to excel always, put any kind of strain on you mentally? Did you ever feel that the effort was too much? The reason I ask is several children come into the world with exceptional talent; they make a name and later fade into oblivion as they cannot take the constant pressure of expectation.

As a child, I played the veena with effortless ease. As I grew older, I felt the strain of veena-playing as it is a difficult instrument. People expecting fireworks on the stage, the onstage demands etc., do lead to stress. I do not know how other child prodigies fade away (as mentioned by you), but is it required to be on stage all the time

to prove one is a musician?! Music need not always end on a dais. Music should be directed inwards.

Did you ever feel that you had done everything, seen everything, played at all major venues and there was no more excitement left, especially since you accomplished all of this, when you were not even a teenager!

Musically I feel I have not achieved anything. Music is an ocean, I am always a student and there is no end to learning. I feel no sense of achievement at having performed everywhere, as I don't measure my achievements in terms of kutcheris. I am unaffected by all this.

Why have you played other genres of music? Is it because you love all types of music and want to experiment? Is it to attract the masses towards classical music? If so, does it work? Our senior musicians have always felt that classical art is not for the masses. What is your opinion?

Most of the Carnatic musicians gravitate towards film music after establishing themselves in classical music. Since my father was a movie director, I have played veena for films from childhood. I tend to think differently and maybe that is why I have dabbled in different genres of music. I was also keen to project the versatility of the veena. I strongly support the statement that Carnatic music is not for the masses. I have always played traditional Carnatic music. I have experimented with the veena only from a technical point of view (different finger-techniques for different genres).

I had asked you why you and Shyamala did not play jugalbandhis. You replied that you were never interested. But you seem interested in playing fusion, pop etc. How does the purist in you like doing these non-traditional forms of music?

I have a particular dislike for jugalbandhis due to unpleasant experiences in the past. I was never enamoured of them. I am a purist in whatever subject I handle. When I was younger I wanted to try different things. Today I would not want to do fusion or anything else. I am drawn more towards Omkaram.

You are deeply involved in spirituality. Do you at any time feel that performances now are an intrusion and stand in the way of your spiritual leanings? I ask this, as I sometimes feel the fire in you which was palpable in your early years, seems missing now. You sometimes appear detached from what you are playing. Though the music that emanates is still of very high order, I feel you are not in it. Am I imagining it?

CERTAINLY! 100%! Today's growing number of sabhas, increasing population that makes travelling and commuting (with the veena), absolutely agonising, not to mention depleting energy levels, increasing expectations of audience, lack of a serene atmosphere conducive to creative work like music (general cacophony in city lives-blaring car horns, TV sets, non-stop ringing of mobiles, doorbells), social/emotional/routine day-to-day problems, etc. tempt me to give up all this to go to a quiet place (not to

another concrete jungle, like the multiplex flats which are sprouting everywhere), to a village with a temple, to lead a simple and minimalist life, with pooja and meditation. Maybe, play the veena on the banks of the river with birds chirping around and watching the sun rise or set.

It is true that I am spiritual and like nothing better than becoming a part of nature and not bound by restrictive demands of kutcheris, need for preparation for the same etc. I would like to wander on temple trips, stay in ashrams (I am a regular at Shri Ramana Ashram) and generally be in a spiritual atmosphere. Even though Carnatic music which I play is spiritual, the same cannot be said about the field! Right now, I try to find solace through my veena practice and the fact that I am able to give sublime bliss to listeners! I do it as a service towards elevating my soul. I am very detached from everything, no wonder it shows. About the music I produce, I do not take credit for it; it is due to God's grace. I am an instrument in the hands of God, meant to play the instrument, veena.

As a parent, are you disappointed that music has not been a career choice with either of your daughters? Do they like music? Did you teach them to play the veena? Did you ever teach other students? Do you not feel like passing on your style to students so that it lives on after you?

As a mother I was always keen that my daughters should learn music, not to make a career of it, but just for their own good (for relaxation of mind and

elevation of soul). My elder daughter Deepta plays the veena well enough, my second daughter Haritha knows to play the veena and has a good ear for music too.

As a child I started playing veena as an obsessive passion, today, I am flowing with the tide, with no specific goal or interest. I feel neutral. I am not interested enough to "pass on" whatever I know, what do I know anyway?

You have always led a very disciplined and quiet life despite being a celebrity. How have you remained focussed, unspoilt by all the attention and fame? That shy hesitant smile and those charming manners must have captivated hearts all over the world! When I come across young famous musicians with attitude, I wish they would learn from you about bhavyam-essential to continue growing.

Yes, I have always led a very quiet life. I love my solitude, my time to pray, to go for a drive and generally do things that make me happy. In fact I prefer not to be recognised when I go out.

Do you have any words of advice for young budding musicians? Or for the scores of parents who push their children into music hoping they will earn name and fame? (Many times, parents kill the natural interests of the child by pushing them along unrealistic expectations).

Parental pressure and general greed for instant success and glamour is one of the reasons why I am not too keen on teaching. Music

nowadays is learnt, not for the sake of music, but for the sake of name and fame. One should practise like a devil to play like an angel; this is what I would like to tell all youngsters!

Do you feel schools should seriously consider including classical music as a subject so that it reaches young impressionable minds at the right time?

You are right! It would be great to introduce music as part of the syllabus, but care should be taken while appointing teachers. The teachers should have the skill to communicate with a schoolgirl or boy of today.

You perform all over the world. Do you feel the rasikas abroad are more receptive and better informed?

I have played in most of the places abroad, if they are NRIs in the audience, they are more receptive. As for foreigners, they are fascinated by the instrument itself, by its resonance, the way it is held etc. They are extremely appreciative.

Do you think the media has to play a larger role in promoting the classical arts? The media seems to promote fashion, movies and sports all the time, while classical arts are given a small mention, rarely. Do you think the government should play a bigger role in highlighting the importance of our classical arts?

Yes, media does play a very important role. Maybe, like you said government could do something in that direction. Most importantly, television could have an exclusive channel for Carnatic music and play

archival recordings of legends, living maestros etc. That could lure back people who are after shallow stuff.

Do you plan your concerts or play what comes to your mind when you sit on the stage? Do you look at audience composition when you play?

I generally plan the outline of the concert, which is subject to change depending on the pulse of the audience. When the audience is knowledgeable, I play serious kritis in vilamba kala, lots of neraval, swaras, and lengthy raga essays. If the audience is not very erudite, I go for fast-paced kritis, colourful swara patterns, many tukkadas etc. I go by the audience and audience only.

Do you still practise for several hours everyday? The effortless ease with which you play, the uninterrupted flow of ideas in ragam, tanam, neraval and swaraprastaram makes one wonder whether it is practice or something ineffable that makes it all happen!

I used to practise for many hours earlier (as a child) but now it is for 2 hours or even lesser! The hard work I did as a child is probably standing me in good stead. I am what I am due to the grace of divinity. I totally depend on the strength I derive from God.

On that very philosophical, humble note, Gayathri signed off. A busy celebrity, taking time off, to express her views honestly, with no airs whatsoever, speaks volumes for the truly great sadhaka she is.

- Kripa Subramaniam

Carnatic music system evolved from one of the oldest systems dating back to the Sama Veda of vedic times. The Trinity and the Post Trinity composers have poured forth kriti after kriti adding lustre and enriching our system thereby. By now, it is common knowledge that this system is steeped in scientific foundation making it technically sound and also immaculately aesthetic in appeal. Kritis are based on raga structures giving ample scope for the musician to delve deep into the ocean of music and revel in them. Majority of kritis are bhakti-oriented and these kritis stand testament to the fact that one can attain "Saayujya" practising Nadayoga.

Annamayya, Purandaradasa, the Trinity and all other composers practised 'Nadayoga' the acme of perfection through their music. Later it entered the portals of the temples, then to the courts of kings and zamindars and now it has reached the sabha halls and music has reached the zenith of sheer professionalism for the sake of offering as a plain and simple medium of entertainment. The golden era of Carnatic music falls between 1920 and the 1990's as we understand it now. There were many stalwarts like Bidaram Krishnappa, Coimbatore Thayi, Tiger Varadachari, Mysore Vasudevachar to mention a few.

Senior citizens who are in their seventies and eighties have had the good fortune of listening to the greats like Ariyakudi, Musiri, Semmangudi,

G.N.B, Brinda, M.S., M.L.V., who were trailblazers during their tenure. Now at this point of our musical history, there is a total paradigm shift in the classical music scenario. The threshold of classicism that we talk about is bound to change from one period to another and has changed undoubtedly. The generation gap that we discuss in other fields has crept in and perhaps one can say "pazhayana kazhithalum, pudiyana puguthalum" - old order changeth yielding place to new. The old guards cannot live eternally, here comes the soul-searching, for the prospective young music students, while taking to music as a profession to make and mark their contribution to the growth of our Carnatic music system.

In music the invariables are "Sruti Mata & Laya Pita". The variables are voice quality, lineage, presentation, packaging and marketing oneself to reach a wider section of the musical fraternity and thus later on one can bask in one's achievement in this fine art.

One would like to take the most important 'variable', the voice quality and discuss various aspects that go with it. The diversity in voices gives out myriad expressions in the music. Voice is a thing that is bestowed by God and a good voice is indeed a gift. No two voices are the same in terms of tenor, texture, felicity, speed etc. The practical part of taming the voice (more so for young boys) to suit the rigours of singing is "Sadhakam" i.e., putting the voice into constant practice

so that the voice obeys the command of the musical intellect. 'Sadhakam' is mandatory to achieve voice control and pliability, so that anything can be negotiated while singing raga, kriti and swaras.

The voice should be trained so that it can traverse mandara (low register), madhya (middle register) and tarasthayi (upper register) so that it can produce a wholesome effect. The student should make an informed choice to take to a 'Bani' (style of singing) that is suited to his voice structure and perfect the art of presentation. Some voices are naturally slow-paced, some are racy, and some have innate 'azhuttam'. A compatible, comfortable 'shruti' to suit the voice tenor is an important prerequisite. In olden days we are told that there were no microphones and yet the singer sang stridently and reached out to everyone in the audience. Now we have the microphone that artists almost gobble up while singing. The microphone, like the two sides of a coin, can reach and cater to a large audience and can also exaggerate any flaw while delivering the notes. Shall we say it is a boon as well as a bane? A crooning voice does not bring out the natural beauty of our Carnatic system in its entire gamut.

Now taking a few voices for our analysis, we can note how the past masters exploited these strong attributes, capitalized on it positively and earned name and fame. Talking about slow-paced voices, the late M.D.Ramanathan stood out like a rock of Gibraltar. He possessed the inborn intelligence to harness his voice to the best of his ability that none can match. His voice had an uncanny exclusivity

and his voice and singing style were made for each other. He was indeed a pragmatist.

Next comes, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, whose recalcitrant voice played truant in his teens and made Pudukkottai Dakshina Moorti Pillai chide him. The maestro asked Semmangudi to take to an instrument rather than to vocal music. This incident was enough to spur Semmangudi. He took it as a challenge and won 'mind over matter'. The rest is history, as he was later called 'sangeeta pitamaha'. One does not know if anyone in this age and time has the will and the mental make-up to practise so relentlessly and master a handicapped 'saareeram' to reach such a pinnacle.

K.V.Narayanaswami captivated the audience with a dulcet voice and it had a soothing texture. One felt that his voice possessed an inner leisure (extremely essential for any art form to flourish) that swayed the rasika's core. Effective neraval singing is a difficult thing to come by. His voice created kaleidoscopic colours in the neraval segment. His nuggets of neraval singing traversed exquisitely through the sthayis. This was his simple 'mantra' to win over his audience.

When one talks about 'azhutham' in a voice, Brindamma & D.K.Pattammal stand tall. Both had gargantuan lineage to boast of and they created an extra dimension to their art. Brindamma had a style which was tough; a sangati had to be packed in between lyrics to an exacting speed. One has to synchronise speed, lyrics and the talam. This demanded a voice quality that could achieve this feat

effortlessly. Brindamma's music had that special quality of speed and soukhyam intertwined. Her voice was an amazing one, bringing out amazing music.

D.K.Pattammal (D.K.P), who was with us until recently, took to Dikshitar kritis like a fish taking to water. Her rendering of kritis was sedate like the measured gait of an elephant. Both Brindamma and D.K.P. had their siblings faithfully sing along with them like a shadow. Mukta and D.K. Jayaraman unobtrusively sang along with them; a rare treat indeed. Their singing in tandem bowled over many rasikas for many decades.

Smt. M.S.Subbulakshmi, the queen of music was called "Suswaram Subbulakshmi". This epithet sums up her entire musical quality. Her voice had a universal appeal. Her voice aligned with the shruti flawlessly. Her voice could tug at one's heart. M.S.'s voice was suited admirably to Bhakti bhavam. This was her forte and her music elevated one's soul. Her uncanny voice quality gave that distinct urge both to the singer and the listener to fall at the altar of divinity.

All these masters identified the strong points of their respective voices and honed it to perfection so that their music sparkled like gems. This point is in no way intended to run down the merits of their other facets of singing. It is like saying 'all are but parts of one stupendous whole'.

There are some songs like M.S. singing *Kurai Onrum Illai* (when others sing there is nothing but *kurai*), Semmangudi's *Marubalka*, Mani Iyer's *Sarasa sama dana, Sujana Jeevana* of D.K. Jayaraman that are exclusively

suited to their voice calibre. Even angels would fear to tread and sing these songs. These above mentioned songs were internalised to the extent that none can match them. Their eloquent renditions of these songs are unsullied beauties. The singing of bhajans again needs a unique, facile voice to bring out the emotions. Since all bhajans are extreme emotional outpourings, bhajans transcend and transport the listeners to another realm.

Here one wishes the clock to be put back, so that the modern era youngsters can hear the past masters performing live. It is well-known that no amount of listening to recorded music can substitute live concert listening. And it is impossible to achieve this at this point of time. The recordings can teach to some extent but one has to comprehend the complexity of the well-structured system and surrender unequivocally. One should have the sensibility and the sensitivity to draw on their forte and then flourish. Music is not a mere ritual of learning. Mere knowledge alone will not bestow the wisdom to choose the right, royal path suited to each one of the performers. If endowed with a good voice, an astute brain can analyse and take a 'bani' to scale great heights. In the end the Divine Muse and Guru's grace alone can put one on the path to glory and perhaps dazzle thereafter.



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A Confluence of Banis

- Aishwarya Harish

"Seldom one pictures the formation of a river, seldom one counts the droplets of rain, and seldom one is able to separate the many colourful threads from a sari...."

"Most often we forget to see the beauty of 'the many'... often we fail to revere the strength of unison...."

"Most often we ignore the coming together of many tributaries, many droplets or the many threads... the process... the organisation."

In India, the concept of unity in diversity is extremely well-established and demonstrated. Be it in the arts, languages, cultures, politics or even theism, co-existence and combinations of the many within one is the underlying doctrine. But we only realize the magnificence of this co-existence when we consciously experience even a fraction of it.

It is one such experience which I had been part of, that made me realize such magnificence. Yes, I was one among the 1000 dancers dancing at the mighty Brihadeeshwara Temple of Tanjavur.

The news was out and we were all excited. Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, the architect of the Rajarajeswaram 1000-the thousandth year celebration of the existence of the Brihadeeshwara Temple of Tanjavur by bringing together thousand dancers from India and abroad to offer their art in reverence to the Lord - had laid out the design for her concept and put it forward through ABHAI (Association of Bharatanatyam Artistes of India) of

which she is the president, with the support of the Tamilnadu Government. Senior dancers and Gurus from all over were informed and given the opportunity to throw it open to their students, fellow dancers. My mother, Dr. Jayashree Rajagopalan, one of the senior-most disciples of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, had been asked to co-ordinate for the Mumbai/ Western region. At home, the air was filled with excitement. The diaries were open and phone calls went out to all the dancers we could possibly contact.

Even though the entire choreography and concept were put together by Dr. Padma, a Bharata Nrityam exponent, the idea that one could be one among thousand dancers and have such a once-in-a-lifetime experience, made any lines of difference in schools of dance, style or form fade away.

However, there still were the speculating ones and the doubting Thomases who felt, how could such a huge event be co-ordinated like this? How can dancers following such varied styles learn and perform the very same thing in unison and complete co-ordination? Their answers came soon in the form of DVDs. All dancers who had signed up for participation had registered with ABHAI and each Guru then received a DVD specially made for the event comprising the Ganesha Kavuthwam, Karuvur Devar's ten verses and the Shiva Panchakshara Stotram. The highlight among these was the ten verses of Karuvur Devar. These were brought to light during Dr.

Padma's research and she found that these were spontaneously composed by the mystic saint Karuvur Devar thousand years ago on the day the Lord of the Brihadeeshwara Temple was first being installed. Dr. Padma found these only too apt to be performed a thousand years later and hence set these verses to music and choreography.

Even as we began learning by watching the DVD, it was heartening to see how students from varied schools of Bharatanatyam had been roped in, taught and allowed to mould the movements slightly to what they were comfortable with. The movements and expression of each of the dancers also flowed with such ease that learning became uncomplicated and interesting.

Finally, the 25th of September 2010 arrived and we were anxious and eager throughout our journey. As we reached Tanjavur, we saw group by group, dancers from all over, belonging to different schools, different *banis* assembling at the hotel. The arrangements made were exemplary, the government of Tamil Nadu had arranged for hotel stay and food for all dancers and buses that took us to and fro from hotel to temple to station. ABHAI had taken care of the organizing of dancers, the registrations, the badges etc.

The security was high as the Chief Minister was attending the function, but not a single hassle despite this. All of us were taken in different buses to the temple. As we entered, the structure was totally awe-inspiring. The place was full of colour and brightness with all the dancers dressed in full costume brimming with excitement.

The sun began setting, the lights came on, the media had turned up in full strength, the dancers were organized, the sweet sound of *nagaswaram* began and the announcements were made. The *shikhara* was shining in the glorious light of the moon and the sounds of the music made it even more resplendent. Everyone suddenly went back a thousand years.

As the Ganesha Kavuthwam began playing, and as we heard the thousand pairs of *shalangais* of the thousand dancers jingle together to the same beat, our eyes seemed to water out of sheer ecstasy. As the items proceeded to the ten verses of Karuvur Devar followed by Shiva Panchakshara Stotram, it was almost as if one was in a sort of trance intoxicated by spiritual bliss and satisfaction.

As we finished, the *garbha griha* (sanctum sanctorum) was opened for each dancer to take *darshan* of the massive Lingam dressed in beautiful white cloth and flower ornamentation. Each of us was quickly given a shawl as we entered and prasadam as we exited. The exit door allowed each of us to take another *pradakshina* to wholeheartedly complete the experience.

Today, by just being a part of this event it feels like the entire fraternity of dancers has been drawn closer more like a family. A family in which there is immense variety such that each one complements the other and all members work as a team. Rajarajeswaram 1000 has opened the doors to the unbounded, unlimited potential that art has, the will that artistes have and the strength that a fraternity can put forth, irrespective of differences in form, style or school.

India's Great Masters by Raghu Rai and Ashok Vajpeyi;

published by Harper Collins; Pages 167 ; Price Rs. 3500/-



When the definitive history of photography comes to be written, Raghu Rai, India's best known photographer, will capture an important place. Raghu Rai has bagged the French Government award "Officier des Arts et des Lettres" and Padma Shri by Government of India. His books include *Delhi*, *The Sikhs*, *Calcutta*, *Khajuraho*, *Taj Mahal*, *Tibet in Exile*, *India*, *Faith and Compassion: The Life and Work of Mother Teresa* and many more.

In the book under review entitled "India's Great Masters: A Photographic Journey into the Heart of Classical Music" he has captured Indian masters in music in concerts, in their homes, amidst their gurus, and in distinct locations. He profiles only thirteen masters and they are Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, M.S.Subbulakshmi, Mallikarjun Mansur, Kumar Gandharva, S. Balachander, Alla Rakha, Zakir

Hussain, Vilayat Khan, Bismillah Khan, Kishori Amonkar, Hari Prasad Chaurasia and Bhimsen Joshi.

Some of these masters have departed and their portraits form an invaluable record of Indian musical heritage. A vital part of this book is the illuminating text written by noted writer and music expert Ashok Vajpeyi, chairman of Lalit Kala Akademi. The book gives an alluring profile of each of these maestros' uniqueness and greatness and reveals highlights of their life and what makes them tick. It also provides remarkable snapshots of their lives, couched in lyrical language.

Talking about the genesis of the book Raghu Rai said, "These are only a few who played not for entertainment but to dispense the aishvarya ras amongst the audience. Their music takes you to such spiritual heights, which otherwise is impossible to attain. Those profiled in this book are not just good musicians, they bear exceptional traits. They may belong personally to any particular gharana but that didn't restrain them to part with their individuality. These people have taken music to greater altitudes. They were looking for the divine shower, and I was busy trying to picture their soul through my lens, and the results find place in this book".

The famous sitar player Vilayat Khan once said that classical music was not meant for entertainment, rather it was for upliftment. The portraits of Raghu Rai depict these

famous classical music exponents into meditation and the stage of ecstatic release. The pictures were only taken after the artistes were immersed in the music for hours. The painful and euphoric climax comes only then, says Raghu Rai. He has shot them in concert, in their homes, at *riyaaz* and sometimes in unexpected, candid moments. "Over the last four decades, I have been listening to the Masters, photographing them and interacting with them. The book is a tribute to them," says the 68-year-old Rai.

Eight of the Masters are no more, so their photographs, says Rai, will become their definitive ones. You catch a young Ravi Shankar as he relaxes in his garden while in others he has been captured in different moods at concerts or enjoying private moments with his daughter Anoushka and wife Sukanya. We see Ali Akbar Khan in his California home, M.S. Subbulakshmi being blessed by Satya Sai Baba and Mallikarjun Mansur on his deathbed. Raghu Rai's selection of artistes for this book is based on two major creative aspects — musicians who have evolved an individual style within their gharanas and scaled spiritual heights with their music. He says, "It's the intensity of their expressions at the height of creative moments that makes a picture memorable. And a good picture prolongs the life of that moment."

To afford a glimpse of the book we select three artistes, masters of different instruments, as exemplified by Raghu Rai. Yehudi Menuhin termed Ravi Shankar "without doubt one of the greatest musicians today. He has

not only brought Indian classical music to the West but he has also, in no small degree, influenced western music. His genius and humanity can only be compared to that of Mozart's". Rich tribute from a great violinist but highly deserved.

Bismillah Khan transformed a folk music instrument into a worthy vehicle of classical music. He made the shehnai popular on the classical concert platform and became one of the most sought-after classical instrumentalists of our times. Bismillah's music had Kashi's fragrance and the abandon of the Ganga. Like the holy city and the holy river, his music appears eternal, ceaseless, ever flowing.

S. Balachander is a major musician from outside the more dominant and age-old guru-shishya parampara. He went on mastering one instrument after another, entirely on his own, untutored and sans a guru. He started playing well on the tabla, the harmonium, the bul-bul tara, the mridangam, the dilruba and the sitar. He was one of the few South Indian musicians well-versed in and knowledgeable about North Indian and Western classical music.

The book under review is a photographic journey into the heart of classical music and one great photographer's tribute to the great exponents of Indian classical music. Most of the photographs have captured the essence of the artistes with beauty and fidelity. One cannot conceive of a better way of paying tribute to these great Indian classical masters. Beyond doubt this is fulfillment of a collector's dream.

The special issue Banis of Bharatanatyam and Recent Trends looks painstakingly researched, well-produced and edited. I see Kattumanarkoil title does not state "bani" which others do. The Attendance review by Mr. A. Seshan is THE best-ever, in the last twelve years of its existence. I will treasure it and also share it with our readers in the next issue under print. Now I have to live up to it and maintain the established and expected standards.

- **Ashish Khokar**

The special issue on Banis of Bharatanatyam and Recent Trends brought out by Shanmukha is very informative and educative not only to budding Bharatanatyam artistes but also to rasikas. It gives comprehensive accounts of various Natyacharyas and their popular disciples.

Regarding Vazhuvoor Sri Ramaiah Pillai, please permit me to add the following:

Sri V.B. Ramaiah Pillai (VBR) was awarded the "Sangeetha Kalasikhamani" title by the Indian Fine Arts Society in the year 1974.

He was the dance master for various Tamil films released during the period 1935 - 1945. Particular reference could be given to the picture "ASHOK KUMAR" released in 1940 starring the then superstar M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar and Kannamba in which Pillai set up the

dance for the song *Unnaikandu Mayangatha pedai undo* sung by MKT for which Kannamba danced. This song was a hit and used to be sung by rasikas then and even today!

Some of the dance masters coached by him are still very popular in the field, Swamimalai Rajaratnam, P.S. Gopalakrishnan (dance master of Padmini for whom he choreographed many dance dramas), K.J. Sarasa and his son Vazhuvoor V.R. Samraj.

Dance is an art and only dedicated personalities become very popular and find a place in the hearts of rasikas.

- **N. Srinivasan**
Secreatary, Indian Fine Arts
Society, Chennai

The Banis of Bharatanatyam and Recent Trends volume is very appealing and a valuable addition. Please convey my thanks and greetings to everyone in the editorial committee.

- **Nandini Ramani**

The special issue is excellent in every way! Congratulations.

- **Sucheta Chapekar**

The issue has come out beautifully and I must congratulate all of you who have worked for it.

- **K. Subadra Murthy**

I felt very happy and proud reading about our family members and their contribution to the field of dance. Kudos to Jyothi Mohan for bringing out the speciality of our bani so well, starting from the adavus, the significance of azhuttham in the footwork and grace in body movements to the variety in adavukorvais, variations in the hastas in these korvais, and the cross-rhythms used in nritta based items. The views of the Gurus on various elements like, subtlety of expression, the use of narrative choreography, interpreting songs of various great composers, and the importance of controlled emotions as per the characters in the sancharis have been nicely interwoven. Congratulations!

- **Pushpa Krishnamohan**
(daughter of Guru Mahalingam Pillai)

I really liked Jyothi's article on the Tanjavur bani and the way in which she has presented its various aspects. The history, family tree, the move to Bombay, the growth of the institution from a sapling to a banyan tree and the views of the gurus were so vivid, clear and cohesive that it was as if the reader was listening to the narration of a story.

- **Bharathi Murthy**
(granddaughter of Guru
Mahalingam Pillai), Singapore

The issue on dance was very nice. I read it a couple of times savouring it.

- **Jamna V.**

Congratulations to Shri A. Seshan for the efforts taken by him on the special issue and his article on the Vadivelu and Vazhuvoor centenaries. It was good to read about the famous Bharatanatyam performance of Anandi and Radha with the melodious singing of M.S. Subbulakshmi. Reading this article prompted me to write about another rare incident about yesteryear musicians.

Before construction of our sabha building, the annual series of music, dance and drama was conducted in a special pandal erected at the Don Bosco school playground. During 1956-57 annual series, noted Carnatic musician Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar gave a concert accompanied by veterans T.S. Rajamanickam Pillai on violin, Palghat Mani Iyer on mridangam and Umayalpuram on ghatam. Being a week day the programme started at 7 pm. The audience was spellbound from the start. At about 9 pm Ariyakudi started the main item in Kambhoji *Ma Janaki* in his melodious, humming tone. When he started neraval in his characteristic style with brighas, it was 10 pm. After one marathon high-pitched round of neraval, the able violinist, enjoying the music for few seconds, did not play in turn. Ariyakudi glanced at him and gestured as to what had happened. Immediately Rajamanickam Pillai kept his violin down and standing up with folded hands, politely said, "Iyengarval, arputam, asathiam" in Tamil meaning "Excellent, stupendous" and continued, "and in that melody I got mesmerised and my hands did not play the violin". Iyengar

told him gently "Take your seat, I will repeat the same and with able assistance from Mani I am sure you can follow perfectly". Without further ado Iyengar turned back, inhaled a pinch of snuff and resumed singing, accompanied by the violinist beautifully. The entire audience applauded for 2 minutes. After RTP and famous tukkadas of those times were rendered, the programme ended by 11:15 pm. In my lifetime it was the first occasion to see one vidwan appreciating the other in the middle of the performance itself!

- T.S. Nilakantan, Mumbai

I am writing this note of appreciation on the special issue on the Banis of Bharatanatyam. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the edition. I found the issue a rare find; often times at dance performances one hears hushed conversations from the informed and the poseurs about some adavu being of merit under a certain school or some jathi lacking the dexterity of the bani under which the artiste comes from etc. As a rasika not knowing enough to comment, one is left to the confines of silence than revealing one's inadequate understanding.

This book gives a bird's eye view of what these styles entail, especially from the English-speaking audience perspective. Indeed, a perfect coffee table book. Congratulations.

- Vivek Menon

Obituary

Sikkil Kunjumani, elder of the well-known flutist-duo, passed away in Chennai on 13th November 2010. She was 83. She is survived by her sister Neela and 2 children. She had her initial training in flute under her uncle Azhiyur Narayanaswamy Iyer and from her father Azhiyur Natesa Iyer. Kunjumani was decorated with the Padma Shri award and the Sangita Kalanidhi title.

Obituary

Nirmala Ramachandran, veteran dancer of the Pandanallur tradition, passed away on 23rd February 2011 in Chennai. Nirmala had the privilege of learning directly under Pandanallur Chockalingam Pillai and later from Tiruvalaputtur K. Swaminatha Pillai and Mylapore Gowri Ammal. She was instrumental in promoting Bharatanatyam in other countries particularly Russia where she taught for many years. Nirmala was the recipient of awards like the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, TTK award by the Madras Music Academy and the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana's Nritya Kala Sagaram award.

Sabha Roundup

- Nalini Dinesh

Concert of Sanjay Subrahmanyam 16th January 2011

Leading Carnatic artiste Sanjay Subrahmanyam was conferred the Jayendra Saraswati Award and on that occasion he gave a morning concert which began with a Sahana Ata tala varnam *Evvara Brovaraa* and *Re re manasa*, a Nattai kriti by Chengalvaraya Shastri. This was followed by alapana of Malayamarutam, a raga suited for the morning recital. Bharatiyar's *Chandiran Oliyil Avalai* was the composition with neraval and kalpana swaras at *Payan ennamal uzhaikka sonnal*. The swaras were engrossing and sung at four places in the sahitya - *payan*, *uzhaikka*, *bhakti* and *pizhaikka*! He himself exemplified this repeated entreaty in his Kalyani alapana that followed the Dikshitar kriti in Devagandharam *Kayarohaneshwaram*. He plumbed the depths of Kalyani with painstaking clarity in phrasing and presented his discoveries to his enthralled audience, so that this "uzhaippu" (hard work) did have immediate and spectacular "payan" (use)! The Tyagaraja kriti *Enduku nee manasu* had swaram at the pallavi eduppu and kuraippu at panchamam. In the kuraippu, he sang 3 speeds within the half-avartana swaras that slipped into place perfectly. After *Akhilandeshwari* sung with some rare sangatis, he launched into RTP in Narayani. This seemed to bring down the pace of the

concert a little since it is a little-known raga, though there was also good appreciation among the audience for this very reason - to be able to present a cogent picture of a little-known raga is certainly not an easy task. The pallavi *Narayananaibhajippom avan namathai ninaippom Lakshmi - Narayananaibhajippom* was in 2-kalai Adi talam with eduppu after 5 aksharams. The ragamalika swarams sung only in keezh kalam were interesting; the first four ragas had arohanam starting with the chatushruti rishabham and shuddha madhyamam as Narayani itself does - Priyadarshini (S R2 M1 D1 N3/ S N3 D1 M1 R2 S), Nagavalli (S R2 M1 D2 N2/S N2 D2 M1 R2), Mukhari, Suratti and Komalangi (S R2 G3 M1 P N2/S N2 P M G3 R2). The last swaram blended seamlessly into a kriti in the same raga *Narayananaibhajippom* with sahitya by Raghava Ramanujar. A viruttam *Uppum karpooramum onraippol* preceded *Adum Chidambaramo* in Behag. S. Varadarajan and Neyveli R. Venkatesh provided excellent support on the violin and mridangam.

Mahaswamy Sangeetanjali by Smt R. Vedavalli 18th January 2011

The evening began with an invocation *Himadri sute* (Kalyani) by Aditya and Dharini.



Shri Jayendra Saraswathi blessing
Smt. R. Vedavalli

The sangeetanjali began with Dikshitar's *Ekamranatham* in Poorvikalyani with neraval and kalpana swaras at Panchakshara mantra roopam prasanna roopam bhaje. Smt. Vedavalli's disciple Sumitra Vasudev's contribution to the neraval-swara exercise was excellent.

Shri Jayendra Saraswati who has been participating in this sangeetanjali to Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati every year, gave his benedictory speech after the first item in the concert. He expressed appreciation of the fact that Smt. Vedavalli being a Vaishnavite sang the invocatory verses in praise of Shiva. He then spoke about the guru-shishya relationship illustrating with a story about the place called Orirukkai near Kancheepuram at which a big Shiva temple has been built and whose kumbhabhishekam was being performed in the same month.

The items that followed were *Chandrashekharam ashrae* in Keeravani (with alapana) and *Nenendu vedakudura* in Karnataka Behag. A fairly detailed Mukhari alapana (with Sumitra taking on the



R. Vedavalli (vocal), Sumitra Vasudev
(vocal support), R.K. Shriramkumar (violin),
Arunprakash (mridangam),
Trichy K. Murali (ghatam)

tara sthaya elaboration) preceded *Enta Nee ne* with beautiful neraval at Kanulara sevinchi kammani phalamulanosagi. The mridangam (Arun Prakash) and ghatam (Trichy K. Murali) brought out with muted strokes, the poignancy of Shabari lovingly worshipping and serving Rama. Detailed Shankarabharanam alapana and ragamalika tanam (Shankarabharanam, Varaali, Reetigowla) followed. Reetigowla tanam went slightly off track before getting back on course with some reiterative raga phrases. The pallavi *Guruvini arulai nadu maname sad-guruvini* in 2-kalai Adi with $\frac{1}{4}$ eduppu had keezh kala neraval, a single round of fast neraval and ragamalika swaram in Shankarabharanam, Athana, Shriranjani and Suratti. The swara endings leading to the sahitya line lacked clarity. It was a delectable tani avartanam that we experienced that evening, tantalizingly off-beat including the finale of mridangam and ghatam together. Sadashiva Brahmendra's kriti *Sarvam Brahmamayam* in Madhuvanti rounded off the concert. The choice of

kritis was perfect to suit the occasion, and so was the ambience created by the music of this veteran, tranquil and uplifting, just as being in the presence of the mahaperiyaval would have been. R.K. Shriramkumar provided able support on the violin.

National Eminence Award 19th January 2011



Dr. Vyjayantimala Bali with the National
Eminence award

The 11th Shri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award for Lifetime Achievement in the field of Fine Arts for 2010 was conferred on eminent Bharatanatyam exponent Dr. Vyjayantimala Bali. The veteran artiste who has had a long association with the sabha and who has given countless performances in its precincts accepted the award graciously with a response that was the highlight of the evening's function. It was spoken from the heart, touching upon the various influences on her journey as an artiste and expressing her gratitude to Bharatanatyam itself for how much it had enriched her life. She spoke about the importance of music in this dance form and how she had found

musical excellence in the Tanjore quartet and her guru Kittappa Pillai. This reference seemed so apt, coming as it did before the release of the special issue of *Shanmukha* dedicated to the Tanjore quartet later on in the same evening. Her respect for her gurus (including Dandayudhapani Pillai and her musical guru D.K. Pattammal) and for tradition shone through her speech. Having revived old Tanjore temple numbers with the help of guru Kittappa Pillai, her focus still remains on infusing traditional divinity into her art. Important aspects of an artiste's evolution is passion and focus, and she seems to have been lucky to have family members who not only stoked and channelized her passion (as did her grandmother Yadugiri Devi) but also helped in keeping the fire burning (as did her husband Dr. Bali).



Vyjayantimala Bali releasing the Oct-Dec
2010 special issue of *Shanmukha* and
Editor Smt. Radha Namboodiri (standing)

The function had begun earlier, with an invocation by Kanakavalli and Pradeeksha and a short film on Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali highlighting her achievements, like performances at various international festivals and before eminent statesmen and dignitaries including Dr. Radhakrishnan, Jawaharlal Nehru,

Indira Gandhi, Queen Elizabeth II and Dwight Eisenhower, production of a number of dance dramas including *Andal Tiruppavai*, *Chandalika*, *Azhagar Kuravanji*, *Sant Sakku*, *Ekta* and *Om Shanti Shanti Shanti* and receipt of awards including Padma Shri, Sangeet Natak Academy award and Degree of Letters (Honoris Causa) by the Annamalai University.

Shanmukha Sangeeta Shiromani awards for 2010 were conferred on nadaswaram vidwans Nemmara Brothers (N.R. Kannan & N.R. Anand), K. Bharat Sundar for Carnatic vocal and S. Akash for Hindustani flute.

The function was followed by Bharat Sundar's brisk vocal concert with S.V. Ramachandran on the violin and Rajesh Srinivasan on the mridangam. He sang *Nee Daya Raada* in *Vasanta Bhairavi*, *Aparadhamulanorva* in *Latangi* with alapana mainly in the higher notes and neraval at Naa manavyalakinchhi and *Akhilandeshwari* in *Dwijavanti*. The main item was *Dhanyasi*. The alapana, though detailed, failed to portray the characteristic features of *Dhanyasi*. S.V. Ramachandran's response was also stilted. Shyama Shastri's *Meena Lochana Brova* with good kalpana swaras followed. *Jagadoddharana* and *tillana* in *Behag* which was rendered well brought the recital to a close.

Tamil Drama 20th-21st January 2011

The plays *Kasikku Pona Ganapathy* and *Subhasya Seekiram* performed by Chennai Navabharath

Theatres were disappointing in terms of script, dialogues and performances for Mumbai audiences who eagerly look forward to Tamil plays – an opportunity they get only once or twice a year. Hope the sincerity and commitment of the theatre group translates into better quality performances in future.

Annual Bhajanotsavam 24th- 30th January 2011



Abhishekam performed on idol of Saint Tyagaraja

Bahula Panchami day, the day on which Saint Thyagaraja attained moksha, fell on 24th January this year and was commemorated with an abhishekam and archanai for Tyagaraja's idol, unchavritti led by Udayalur Shri Kalyanaraman, and rendering of Tyagaraja's Pancharatna kritis by students and staff of Vidyalaya and other local musicians at the Essar Hall.

There was a grand group-rendering of Pancharatna kritis in the evening, by musicians from the sabha and sister institutions of the sabha at the Shanmukha Chandra Sekarendra Saraswati Auditorium.



Rendition of pancharatnam by musicians of sabha and sister institutions

This year there were special guests for the evening rendition, Shri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal and Cleveland V.V. Sundaram. Shri Sundaram spoke about how he had watched performances at the sabha in the Sixties from balcony seats and the fact that these very gems of Tyagaraja had brought him this honour of actually being on the dais of this sabha and addressing the audience some five decades later (he was alluding to the Cleveland Tyagaraja Aradhana spear-headed by him from 1978 onwards and which has now become an annual fixture in the North American cultural calendar).



Shenkottai Harihara Subramaniam and troupe



Students of Sharada Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Nanded

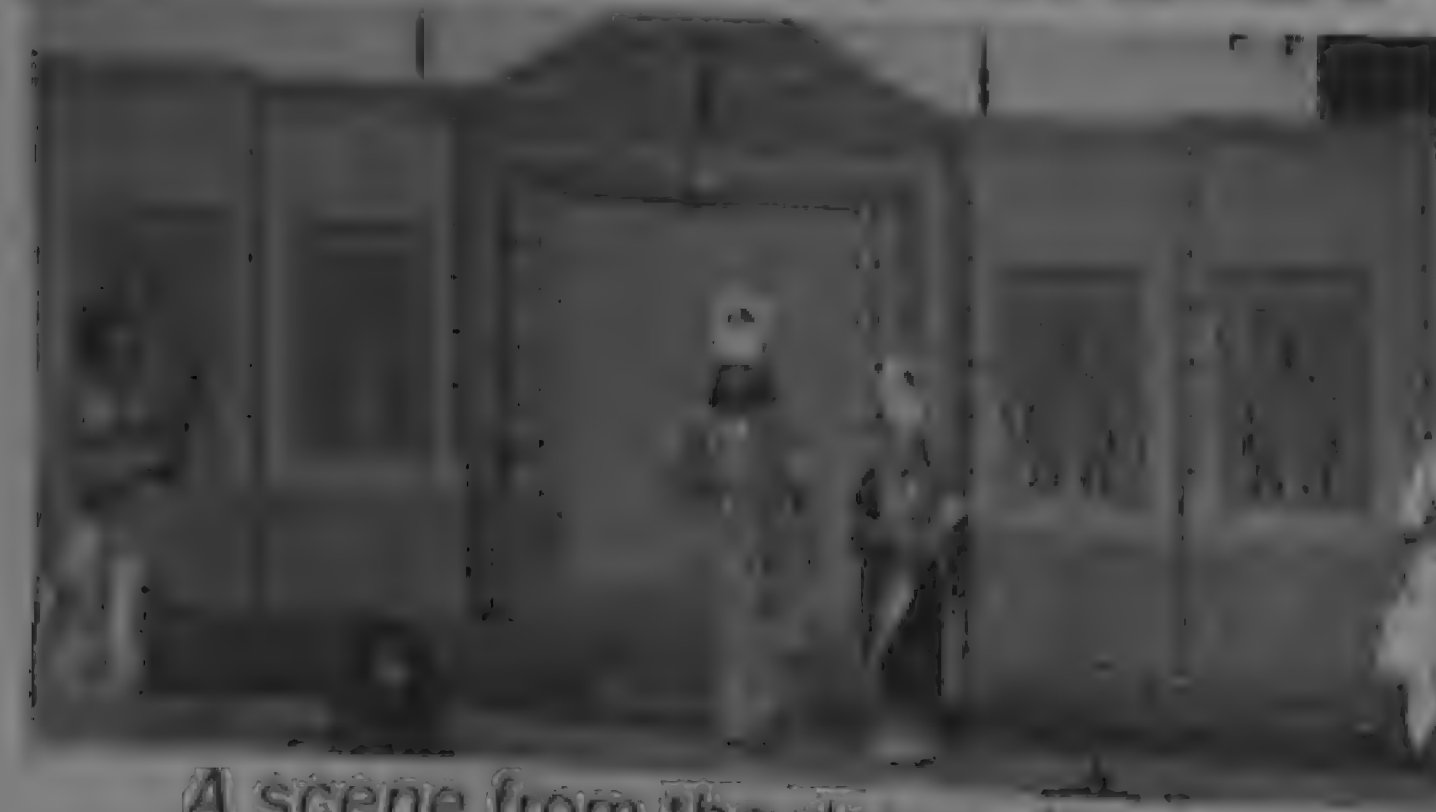
The Bhajanotsavam also featured Udayalur Kalyanaraman's nama sankeertanam, Shenkottai Harihara Subramaniam's nama sankeerthanam in traditional bhajana paddhati which was appreciated specially by elder members, *Vittala Namachra Gajra* by Sharada Sangeetha Vidyalaya from Nanded (whose abhang renditions have captivated the sabha audience every year) and Vishakha Hari's marvellous *Shabari moksham* and *Gajendra moksham* harikathas which drew record crowds as usual.



Harikatha by Vishakha Hari

Vishakha's presentations are crisp, tightly knit (to the extent that the opening shloka she employs, figures in her conclusion or summation as well), sans excessive divergence from the main topic (though divergence is of course the main spice in a Harikatha performance), minimum ranting about the good old days and the current depraved state of society as many other harikatha exponents are wont to (though there are many ills in current society and some good old practices are less prevalent now, it is not all bad either; some old customs have even lost practicality in the current age) with a good choice of supporting kritis, rendered aesthetically with judicious choice of sahitya for neraval in order to emphasize the point being discussed. Her self-effacing humour (for instance, her joke on her sore throat which made her cough continuously through the two days of her performance), complete and unshakeable faith in the Lord which she conveys to the listener too in myriad ways, depth of research and systematic and incisive analysis of her topic make her harikathas, absorbing and rewarding experiences.

Tamil Drama Vazhga Vaikuntham 12th Feb. 2011



A scene from the drama Vazhga
Vaikuntham

This play presented by the sabha's Shanmukha Theatre Group had story, dialogue and direction by Smt. Santhosh Rajan. It had an interesting theme (a devout man's longing to attain the feet of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntham) and good performances by most of the artistes. The length of the play and the verbosity of dialogues dragged down the overall calibre of the play. Also, the dialogue delivery of all artistes seemed to be in the same sing-song tone. The idea of including dance in theatre is also interesting, but they seemed to be forced inclusions rather than melding into the narrative or carrying forth the narrative, except maybe for the first dance which helped establish the ambience at Vaikuntham. Lord Vishnu was quite authentic (with a very attractive laugh too!), so were Narada and Chitragupta. Lakshmi's costume would have done better with silks and zari rather than chiffon and sequins. There was also a logical error in the script – according to the agreement signed by the devout man and the power-corrupted man, both would share the rewards of their commercial endeavours on earth, whether the reward was Vaikuntham or otherwise. In the play's denouement, when it becomes apparent that the devout man is not going to get Vaikuntham, Chitragupta advises the corrupt man (who has now reformed and is himself deserving of Vaikuntham) to tear up the agreement so that he can escape going back to earth with the devout man. In response, the corrupt man tears the agreement and declares that he is ready to go back to earth! Why tear it up at all, since it anyway entails going back to earth. Tightening of the script and dialogues and

attention to such details would vastly enhance the impact of the play.



A scene from Vazhga Vaikuntham

International Women's Day Celebrations 6th Mar. 2011



Ms. Sujata Manohar addressing the
audience



Dance presentation Manini; Sujata Nair
Sanjay (Mohiniattam), Sangeetha Rajan
(Odissi), Anu Narayan (Bharatanatyam),
Anonna Guha (Kathak)

The Women's Wing of the sabha celebrated International Women's Day with a dance presentation 'Manini', conceived and produced exclusively for this occasion by Sangeetha Rajan. The performance was preceded by a small function which began with an invocation *Sudha Madhurya Bhashini* beautifully rendered by Vidyalaya students Dharini and Gayathri. The chief guest Sujatha Manohar, retired Chief Justice, Supreme Court, gave a short but inspiring speech in which she appreciated the presence of many gentlemen in the audience who had come to support the women's cause. She mentioned that for several decades this day was observed all over the world to emphasize traditions, attitudes, equanimity, freedom and other aspects of womanhood which faced success and failure. She spoke about family laws that are provisioned for welfare of women and how it was difficult to effectively implement these. She significantly referred to the creative urge in women which had resulted in bringing forth artistes like M.S. Subbulakshmi, Alamelu Valli and the like and how manifestation of their creativity stood out as incomparable pinnacles of achievement.

The concept of 'Manini' is to celebrate four different aspects of womanhood, namely, woman as a mother, beloved, friend and devotee, through four different styles of Indian classical dance forms. The programme started with Pushpanjali and Bhagavati Stuti which had all four dancers dancing in their respective styles, followed by Sujatha Nair's depiction of the mother. She brought

out the essence of vatsalya bhava (motherly love) with her delightfully detailed portrayal of Yashoda, ably supported by Amrita Shivakumar. Shivaprasad's singing of Irayimman Thampi's popular lullaby *Omana Tingal Kidavo* set to ragamalika and talamalika was outstanding. Next was the portrayal of Radha. Jayadeva's Ashtapadi, *Kapimadhuripuna* (raga Bhageshree, Ektaal) was presented by Sangeetha Rajan in Odissi dance style. The mythological representation of a soul longing for union with Almighty Krishna was a blend of bhakthi bhava and shringara rasa. The longing of Radha to be in Krishna's presence was conveyed in a subtle manner and the vocal support by Soma Sinha added great flourish to the dance. This was preceded by Krishna Tandava by Nivedita Tiwari, Aheli Bose, Sonali Gore and Shivangi Gupta. 'Sakhi' is friend, philosopher and guide and plays a key role in everybody's life. Anu Narayan, alongwith Sonali Gore, Shrutika S. Naidu and Shivangi V. Gupta performed a varnam in Mohanam, specially written and composed for 'Manini' by Smt. Hema Balasubramanian, expressing this aspect in Bharatanatyam style. The

choreography, especially the group choreography, was disappointing and the costumes of the dancers could have been better. Kathak was chosen to portray Meera, the epitome of Bhakthi. Annona Guha with her team of dancers gave a lively presentation which included dramatisation of certain episodes like a marriage procession, Draupadi Vastrapaaharanam and Narasimhavataram. The song chosen was Meera Bhajan *Hari Tuma Haro*, a ragamalika and talamalika. The final item had all the 4 dancers on stage for a tillana in Khamas dancing in their respective styles.

'Manini' was an interesting concept and a sincere effort which would have perhaps had a much greater impact if more thought had gone into how these four styles would be knit together, especially in the pieces which brought together all four styles. The group's solution to this creative challenge was the four dancers dancing in their respective styles simultaneously, but this solution may be the more simplistic and less aesthetic of various other exciting possibilities, which hopefully, this group would explore in greater detail in future performances.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Grant

We are happy to announce that the Sangeet Natak Akademi has approved a financial grant for Shanmukha. We gratefully acknowledge the same and hope we will live up to the high standards set by this august institution and the trust they have placed in us.

Happenings at the Vidyalyaya

- Nalini Dinesh

Annamacharya and Purandaradasa Day 8th January 2011



Karaoke Presentation

Joy of Swaras, a music center which specializes in thematic presentations under the guidance of Hema Balasubramanian presented a unique karaoke programme of select Annamacharya and Purandaradasa compositions. Vocalists Swati, Janani Iyer, Anjali, Janani Govind, Lakshmi, Riya, Shruti and Srinidhi rendered the songs accompanied by music that had been professionally recorded and played on CD. There were no accompanists on stage, except for Akshara who provided flute accompaniment in addition to the recorded background music and provided short commentaries on the composers and the compositions rendered.

The invocatory number was *Gajavadana Beduve* in Hamsadhwani followed by *Rama Nama Paayasage* in Abheri. Young Janani Iyer then did a good alapana of Shankarabharanam

followed by a solo rendition of *Chandrachooda Shiva Shankara*, a ragamalika which also had Sunaada Vinodini, Todi and Khamas. Next, Swati rendered the Shanmukhapriya kriti *Paramapurusha Nirupamana* followed by Swati and Janani Iyer together rendering *Govinda Ninna Namave Chanda* in Kalavati. Then followed *Kandena Govinda* in Chandrakauns by Swati and *Vande Vasudevam* a Purandaradasa kriti in Shree ragam sung by Swati and Janani Iyer, which had a beautiful praasam on the syllables da and ra e.g. brindaara, indeevvara, mandara, kandarpa. The whole group then rendered *Hari Narayana* (Revati), *Enta Matramuna* in Kapi (excepting Swati and Janani Iyer), *Tandanapore* (Bouli) and *Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma* (Madhyamavati).

The children's voices sounded sweet and in good unison and the sangatis were rendered clearly for the most part with the exception of *Rama Nama Paayasage*. The recorded music was of high quality and provided very apt and sweet interludes.

The artistes featured in the recorded music were Saipriya Viswanathan (veena), Hema Balasubramanian (flute), Mangala Vaidyanathan (violin) and Satish Krishnamurthy (mridangam). Script of the commentary was contributed by Roy Charles and background music was composed by Hema Balasubramanian.

While this format cannot replace the traditional live accompaniment format, it is certainly a good option in situations wherein live accompaniment is not feasible due to non-availability of competent artistes, commercial, space or travel constraints and so on.

S. Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concert 11th February 2011



Dr. Bhushan Dhabekar (sitar),
Aatish Gawand (tabla)

Dr. Bhushan Dhabekar, a student of the 6th Year, learning sitar under Shri P.V.Parchure, presented a sitar recital. He was accompanied by Master Aatish Gawand, a student of the 6th Year, on the tabla. Aatish is a student of Shri Milind Joshi. Dr. Bhushan commenced with raag Shivananjani. A Madhya lay gat in teen taal was followed by a drut gat in teen taal. The raga exposition was neat but a greater amount of practice would have made the drut gat more cohesive. It is creditable that he has been pursuing learning sitar in addition to obtaining a doctorate in Physics and holding the post of

Scientific Officer in BARC. He rounded off his recital with a gat in the South Indian raga Sama set to teen taal composed by Shri Karthik Kumar. Aatish accompanied the player with quiet confidence and skill.

The second half of the programme was a Bharatanatyam recital by S. Bhagyalakshmi and Jahnvi Gurav, 7th year students training under Smt. Jyothi Mohan. This is the first time that a dance recital has been presented under Talent Exposure.

Jahnvi has been consistently topping the exams conducted twice a year by the Vidyalaya and has received several scholarship awards each year. Bhagyalakshmi was the recipient of two awards last year.

The duo began their recital with a brisk-paced Ganesha Kavuthvam followed by Tisra Alaripu and neatly-executed jatiswaram in raga Vasanta set to tisra ekam. Muthiah Bhagavathar's *Sarasamukhi* in raga Gowda Malhar depicted a variety of poses of Devi, held with perfect balance, the anger of Shiva and the power of Devi's smiling countenance. The Nattakurinji varnam of Papanasam Sivan, *Sami Naan Undan Adimai* had crisp jatis executed with force and finesse and stories woven into the sahitya delineated with clarity and grace. The concluding item was Purandaradasa's *Dashavatara mangalam* in raga Madhyamavati. Bhagyalakshmi's abhinaya has scope for improvement. She also has to work on her angashuddham and with more practice will blossom into a good dancer. Jahnvi's *anga-shuddham*, taut movements and good *araimandi*

drew appreciation from the audience. The quality of the recorded music was excellent.

The 7th Year batch consisting of five dancers is gearing up for their arangetram later this year. This is the first ever batch of Bharatanatyam students to graduate from the Vidyalaya.



Jahnvi Gurav (standing) and S.
Bhagyalakshmi

Shyama Shastri and Subbaraya Shastri Day 19th February 2011



Bala Swaminathan (vocal), Vimarshini
Jairam (violin), S. Gopakumar
(mridangam)

Bala Swaminathan began her recital with Subbaraya Shastri's Begada kriti *Shankari Neeve* followed by a short Poorvikalyani alapana. The tara sthayi madhyamam and panchamam were not reached fully. *Emaninne*, Subbaraya Shastri's Mukhari kriti followed. A short Madhyamavati alapana preceded *Palinchu Kamakshi* which was rendered well bringing out the raga bhava clearly. The next rendition was a relatively rare Shyama Shastri composition *Akhilandeswari* in raga Kapi. It had beautiful sangatis and was a treat to listen to.



Parvathy Shankar and
Vimarshini Jairam (violin)

The word 'solid' would be appropriate to describe everything about Parvathy Shankar's recital, her voice, kriti renditions, raga alapanas and pathantaram. The seasoned vocalist commenced with Saveri alapana followed by *Durusuga*, *Ninnuvina Marigalada* in Reetigowla, a delightful Darbar kriti of Subbaraya Shastri *Meena Nayana Neevu* preceded by an accurate alapana, *Ninnuvinaga Mari Dikkevaru* in Poorvikalyani (with the mridangist not making use of this viloma chapu opportunity to the full), *Neelayatakshi* in Paras and concluding with

Subbaraya Shastri's Yadukula Kambhoji kriti *Ninnu Sevinchina*. Some kriti renditions seemed to drag a little, maybe because of frequent reference to a notebook. The *Neelayatakshi* rendition didn't quite present vintage Paras.

Violinist Vimarshini seemed to be facing problems with shruti while mridangist Gopakumar provided able support for the most part.

S. Varun anchored the evening's proceedings.

Read

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Errata

We deeply regret the inadvertent omission of the following important awards and titles bestowed on Alarmel Valli in Shanmukha Oct-Dec 2010 issue (Special issue: Banis of Bharatanatyam and Recent Trends); Alarmel Valli, a disciple of renowned gurus Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai and his son, Sri Subbaraya Pillai was the youngest dancer to be conferred the President's award of Padmashri in 1991 and the Padma Bhushan in 2004 for enriching the vocabulary and extending the frontiers of the Pandanallur tradition and the globalization of Bharatanatyam as a dynamic contemporary dance form. The French Government awarded her the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres' and the Grande Medaille (Medal) by the City of Paris. She is the recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, the Kalaimamani, the Nritya Choodamani and recently the Raja Raja Chola Award - to name just a few. Her involvement with Sangam poetry has resulted in a significant body of work - a unique fusion of poetry, melody and movement.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards

Hindustani vocalist Girija Devi and eminent dancer-scholar-guru Nataraja Ramakrishna, have been elected Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellows (Akademi Ratna).

Nagai R. Muralidharan (Violin), Srimushnam V. Raja Rao (Mridangam), and M.V. Simhachala Sastry (Harikatha).

Dance

Malabika Mitra (Kathak), Kalamandalam Kombil Govindan Nair (Kathakali), Phanjoubam Iboton Singh (Manipuri), Ratna Kumar (Kuchipudi), Aruna Mohanty (Odissi), Manik Borbayan (Sattriya), Uttara Asha Coorlawala (Creative and Experimental dance), Kalamandalam Painkulam Rama Chakyar (other major traditions of dance and dance theatre - Kutiyattam) and S. Rajeshwari (music for dance - Bharatanatyam).

Following is the list of recipients of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) for 2010 in the field of music and dance.

Music

Channulal Mishra and Yashpal (Hindustani vocal), Budhaditya Mukherjee (Sitar), Nityanand Haldipur (Flute, Hindustani instrumental), Suguna Purushothaman and Mysore Nagamani Srinath (Carnatic vocal),

Sri Shanmukhananda Kanchi Mahaswami Sangeetha Sangrahaalay

• Summary of Archives •

Summary of Audios

	Carnatic	Hindustani	Total
Concerts	11,969	1,632	13,601
Duration	26,814 hours	3,450 hours	30,264 hours
Tracks	99,244	10,288	1,09,532
Size	1,511.2 GB	194.2 GB	1,705.4 GB
Classifications	345	323	668
Main Artistes Covered	1,045 Artistes	335 Artistes	1,380 Artistes
Accompanists Covered	1,182 Artistes	116 Artistes	1,298 Artistes
Venues / Sabhas Covered	356	41	397
Cities Covered	189	43	232
Years Covered	1928 to 2010	1935 to 2009	1928 to 2010
Tracks Format	MP3 44.1 Khz. 128 kbps Stereo 16 bit		
Tag	Id3 Tag Version 1.1 and Version 2.2		

Summary of Videos

Classification	Videos	Tracks	Size
Carnatic	1,328	2,439	829.3G
Hindustani	241	394	124.7G
Devotional	1,334	1,677	433.3G
Dance	209	397	118.8G
All	3,112	4,907	1506.3G

Total Size of Archives

Carnatic Archives (Audio)	1,511.2 GB *
Hindustani Archives (Audio)	194.2 GB *
Videos - All	1,506.3 GB *
Total	3,211.7 GB *



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Members are aware of the publication of 'Shanmukha', the professional quarterly of the Sabha. It has completed 35 years of existence.

The publication has a high standing among the professionals and aficionados of music, dance and theatre and adds prestige to the Sabha's image. It is one of the few music sabhas in the country that bring out their own professional magazines. The contributions are from experts in their fields. There are reports on the activities of the Sabha. Sometimes it carries valuable articles from other professional magazines and from its own issues of the distant past that are not accessible to the readers otherwise. What is more, there are instances of the articles of 'Shanmukha' being reproduced elsewhere with the Editor's concurrence. The attachment on the contents of the last two issues of the magazine may be seen in this connection.

The subscription for the magazine has not been raised for many years despite increase in the cost of printing. It is now decided to raise the prices as per rates given below :

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The Sabha makes an earnest appeal to those members who are not subscribers to take out annual subscriptions. Members may also consider canvassing for subscriptions with friends and relatives here and in other places. The new rates will be applicable from April - June 2010 issue.

It has also been decided to terminate the life subscription of ₹ 500/- with immediate effect. While the Sabha would continue to honour its commitment to continue to supply the magazine without any interruption, it makes a special appeal to life subscribers to help by making one time donation of say ₹ 1000/- that will be appreciated very much as it will add to the corpus of funds of 'Shanmukha'. Of course, larger or even smaller amounts are welcome.

Members of the Sabha are also requested to consider procuring advertisements from banks and business houses that earmark considerable funds for publicity through various media.

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